Enterprise and Lifelong Learning

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Modern Apprenticeships:
Improving Completion Rates

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MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS: IMPROVING COMPLETION RATES

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**The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and
do not necessarily represent those of the Department or
Scottish Ministers.**

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ABBREVIATIONS

MA	Modern Apprenticeship
MAIG	Modern Apprenticeship Implementation Group
NTO	National Training Organisation
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
QA	Quality Assurance
SME	Small or Medium-sized Enterprise
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SQMS	Scottish Quality Management System
SSAScot	Sector Skills Alliance Scotland
SSB	Sector Skills Body
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
VQ	Vocational Qualification

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 1: Introduction and aims

1.1   This research was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department to assist them in addressing a number of key questions for the development of policy and practice for Modern Apprenticeships. These were specified in the research brief as follows:

- What are the factors that create barriers to completion?
- What benefits are lost to employees and employers from non-completion?
- How can the numbers of employees not completing a MA be minimised?
- What improvements could the Enterprise Network make to the quality of MA delivery, working with training providers?
- How can other stakeholders help improve completion rates eg through:
  - more relevant MA frameworks (Sector Skills Councils)
  - more relevant qualifications (SQA).

1.2   At the request of the Scottish Executive, the research applies only to those aged 16-24 at the time of registering for the MA, and who were registered for a MA through a Local Enterprise Company.

Section 2: Background and context

2.1   The report describes the development and structure of Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland. Figures from the Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, indicate that at the end of March 2003 there were over 25,000 modern apprentices in training in the Scottish Enterprise Network and over 1,500 in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Network. There are in the region of 75 different frameworks available.

2.2   A number of agencies and stakeholders have had key roles in the development, design and delivery of Modern Apprenticeships. These include: the Sector Skills Bodies (SSB) who are responsible for the design of the frameworks, following consultation with employers; the Modern Apprenticeship Implementation Group (MAIG), which is responsible for the approval of the frameworks; Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise which are responsible for funding and administration; and training providers, who have a key role in the delivery of the programme.

2.3   The report reviews previous literature in the field from both England and Scotland. These studies point to a range of factors that can be influential on completion, non-completion and retention in relation to MAs. Firstly, the value accorded to the MA by young people, employers and the wider occupational sector; secondly, the understanding of young people and employers of what the MA is; thirdly, the way that the training is delivered and the location in which it is delivered; fourthly, job conditions such as pay, prospects, the security of the job, and the opportunities for receiving appropriate training or experience; and finally, personal issues.

Section 3: Methodology

3.1   The research deployed both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative analysis was based on datasets provided by Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

3.2   The qualitative data were gathered through interviews with key staff from the major agencies involved in Modern Apprenticeships - the Enterprise Network, the Local Enterprise Companies, Careers Scotland and the Sector Skills Bodies (SSB). In addition a sample of training providers and employing organisations were interviewed.   The young people themselves were an essential source of information and interviews with former apprentices, both completers and non-completers, were undertaken.

3.3   The sample covered 6 frameworks - Business Administration, Construction, Customer Service, Hospitality, Motor Vehicles and Retail Distribution. Three Scottish Enterprise Network Local Enterprise Companies (Glasgow, Forth Valley and Grampian), as well as the whole of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, provided a varied geographical and economic base for the study.

Section 4: Overview of existing data

4.1   The report analyses statistical data in order to provide information on uptake and growth of the MA programme, completion and non-completion rates, the social and demographic characteristics of apprentices, and the time spent on the programme by completers and non-completers. Completion rates for other types of vocational training/education are also provided.

4.2   In Scottish Enterprise Network, there was major growth in uptake of MAs between the years 2000-01 and 2001-02, from 9,392 to 16,406 starts (a 74% increase), with a consolidation in the number of new starts since. In Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the period of significant growth was between 2001-02 and 2002-03, from 642 to 1685 starts (a 162% increase).

4.3   Completion rates in Scottish Enterprise Network over this period remained relatively stable despite the large increase in starts. In 2000-01 48% of apprentices completed. There was a small rise to 51% in 2001-02, followed by a return to 48% in 2002-03.

4.4   Comparison of completion rates between programmes indicate the complexity of the pattern across the MA programme. These figures indicate that despite a difference in history of apprenticeship and training between 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' frameworks, there is no evidence in the data that this is producing major differences in completion. Although MAs in construction and motor vehicles have generally well established traditional structures, this is not leading to significantly better completion rates than those found in business administration or customer service, and indeed the completion rates in motor vehicles are considerably lower.

4.5   In both Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise traditional gender recruitment patterns in sectors such as construction and motor vehicles are maintained. In these sectors not only are females unlikely to register for a MA, but the non-

completion rate is greater than for males. This pattern is repeated across the other frameworks such as business administration where there is a very high percentage of females.

4.6   The age of the apprentice at the start of the MA was not found to have an effect on whether or not the apprentice completes.

4.7   The time it took apprentices to complete the MA varied greatly within and especially between frameworks. For example, the majority of those undertaking a construction MA completed it after 3-4 years, while over half of those completing a customer service MA did so in less than 6 months (and 12% achieved it after being registered for 3 months or less). There was no clear pattern in the time spent on the programme by non-completers. Less than half of the sample of non-completers left in the first 6 months.

4.8   In terms of ethnicity, in the Scottish Enterprise Network area, although actual numbers are small, the percentage of apprentices starting on MAs from ethnic minority groups is higher than the population of these groups as defined in the last census. Apprentices remain overwhelmingly white, 94.2% in Scottish Enterprise Network and 99.6% in Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

4.9   Between January 2000 and January 2003 in the Scottish Enterprise Network, 63 starts were registered as disabled.

4.10   The report highlights some significant data collection issues. Apprentices are not tracked by the MA management information system, so when an apprentice changes training provider or employer, a new record is created and they are registered as a non-completer on their former record. Non-completion and other figures cannot be calculated in absolute terms without the benefit of a cohort analysis. As registration can take place at any time, and the duration of the MA is flexible, a cohort analysis is not possible using existing data.

Section 5: Factors associated with completion and non-completion

5.1   The report explores factors that influence whether or not young people complete the MA.

5.2   Having a supportive workplace context emerged as a key theme from all the interview datasets. Employers who took an interest in the training process and who understood the MA programme or where a key manager, for example, was particularly supportive, could be important in whether or not the MA was completed. A work culture in which training is prioritised and valued can have a positive impact on completion rates. This included peer support. The wages and conditions provided by some employers were found to result in a low level of staff morale and contributed to high levels of turnover.

5.3   Training providers emerged as having a key role that affected completion or non-completion depending on the quality of the training support offered. A good relationship between the apprentice and a training officer/assessor can be crucial to completion. However, it was reported that in too many cases training providers saw their role as SVQ assessors, rather than as trainers. Induction and recruitment, responsibilities often shared between employers and training providers, also played an important part in completion and non-

completion. Related to this is the level of information offered to young people about the nature and purpose of the programme they are undertaking.

5.4   These problems with training and recruitment have led to the suggestion by a number of respondents that the quality assurance procedures currently in place are not appropriate, and are failing to help deliver a high quality training system. It has been suggested that the focus of the SQMS audits had not focused sufficiently on the quality of the training. This has led to a major review of Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS) within the Scottish Enterprise Network, and the recognition that it needs to move towards becoming a system which focuses more on the quality of the training which is being provided, and which encourages training providers to take more responsibility for the development of their own organisations.

5.5   The nature and extent of training provided within frameworks emerged as a key issue associated with completion / non-completion. It was reported that in some frameworks, particularly the traditional ones, off the job training, in the form of a Further Education FE college or other training provider, is a key aspect of MA programmes. In others, usually the non-traditional frameworks, all training is provided in-house, which they argue is more suited to the young people's learning needs and their own sector's development. However the importance of structured training, and the problems which were created by the absence of training, was emphasised, particularly by the young people who were interviewed.

5.6   Concerns were raised by a number of respondents with regard to the appropriateness of the content of the framework, and its relationship to the level and content of the job roles. In a number of cases it was suggested that young people find it difficult to fulfil the requirements for the SVQs because of the type of work they do. This raises questions about whether SVQs are set at the correct level, given the work which young people undertake in sectors such as retail and customer service.

5.7   Problems with core skills were identified by a number of training providers and by some SSB representatives as creating barriers to completion. However the value of core skills was also recognised. Neither employers or young people identified this as a major issue. It was also noted that in many cases much of this requirement was being completed on evidence of achievements in schools.

5.8   The report considers the significance of issues related to the young people themselves. Age does not seem to affect completion, although the capacity of the young person to undertake SVQ Level 3 training was seen as significant. MAs remain heavily gendered and this creates barriers to women in traditional MAs, such as motor vehicles. Personal problems were not reported as a primary reason for non-completion. This was also true of the role of incentives provided by some employers and training providers for young people who complete.

5.9   Training providers and young people felt that more could be done to provide information about the MA programme, and that Careers Scotland could have a more positive role in promoting and providing information regarding MAs.

5.10   The funding system operated by Scottish Enterprise Network and the targets set were felt to encourage training providers to place an overemphasis on starts, rather than

completions, and could encourage training providers to place young people on MAs who perhaps were not suitable for the programme.

Section 6: Achievements and destinations of non-completers

6.1   The report seeks to identify the achievements and destinations of non-completers, but noted that the existing data collection systems provide only limited data in this respect.

6.2   Of non-completers who started between January 2000 and January 2003 in the Scottish Enterprise Network area, 49.2% achieved one milestone and 12.8% achieved at least half of the milestones. A milestone includes at least one element of a SVQ unit.

6.3   In Highlands and Islands Enterprise the percentage of non-completers who started between January 2000 and January 2003 and left with no achievement was 65.2%. The percentage who left with part achievement was 34.8%.

6.4   In the Scottish Enterprise Network of those who left between October 2001 and March 2003, 46.2% left their MA either having completed it or to continue training. A further 22.3% are recorded as either having found, or remained in, full-time employment. Less than 10% are recorded as being unemployed or dismissed.

6.5   A significant data collection issue is raised in this section of the report. The category used by Scottish Enterprise Network to describe the reason for leaving the MA for 20.6% of the sample is that of 'other'. In at least one Local Enterprise Company this option is in part used as a way of removing from the live register those young people who have completed all their coursework and assessments and are awaiting certification. In another Local Enterprise Company, a breakdown of the 'other' category showed that a variety of reasons for leaving were included. This category can introduce distortion and reduces the useful information available on the destination of non-completers.

6.6   Of non-completers interviewed for the research, 24 (68.6%) were in some sort of employment at the time of the interview, though the quality of this employment varied. 10 (28.6%) were unemployed at the time of the interview. 8 (22.9%) were in some form of education or training. 11 (31.4%) had definite plans to return to some form of education or training. 3 (8.6%) had since completed another MA. In total, 23 non-completers (65.7%) said they would be interested in doing another MA, were due to start another MA soon, or were planning to return to complete their MA soon.

6.7   The report indicates that the tracking and certification of non-completers is extremely limited. It notes that part-certification of SVQ achievement could play a part in making the benefits from achieving part of a MA as transferable as possible, to assist career development.

Section 7: Benefits lost and gained in cases of non-completion

7.1   The report seeks to evaluate what benefits might be lost to employers and employees in cases of non-completion of the MA and whether there are benefits that can be gained by employers or employees despite non-completion.

7.2   Employers took different stances on the effects of losing staff before completion depending on the sector they worked in, the training strategies deployed and the availability or otherwise of labour.

7.3   For training providers, non-completion might well be seen as a financial loss, though a more detailed analysis of the funding issue would be required to assess its impact. Employers offered different responses in relation to financial loss depending on the level of financial contribution made by the employer, which varied considerably.

7.4   In relation to career development, completing the MA was largely beneficial to the young people interviewed for the report. Only one completer was not in employment. However, just over a quarter (7) responded that they could have achieved their current status without the MA, although some of this group responded that they felt the MA would be helpful in gaining further promotion.

7.5   Lack of understanding and awareness of what the MA is, on the part of employers and apprentices, is discussed. This can lead to failure to understand the consequences of non-completion. This is a particular issue in those sectors where the MA is not yet well recognised.

Section 8: Recommendations

The report sets out a number of recommendations for change:

8.1   Role of employers

Given the evidence that employers have a key role in ensuring successful completion of apprenticeships, an important priority must be to involve many employers more fully in the programme. Measures must be taken to ensure that they understand its value, that it meets their needs, and to help ensure that they have more effective training infrastructures in place. To achieve this the following steps should be taken:

- The Enterprise Network should be requested to take on a more active and developmental role in working with employers to engage them more fully in the MA programme.
- The SSBs should be requested to indicate what structures they have in place, or are developing, in Scotland to work with employers to engage them with the MA programme.
- The Enterprise Network and the SSBs should be requested to show how they are working together to engage employers more effectively in the programme.

8.2   Role of training providers

Given the evidence that training providers should have a key role in working with employers and apprentices in implementing a training programme, but that their role in training is often limited, and that they have placed too much emphasis on assessment, this training role should be clearly specified and monitored in the following ways:

- The type of training required for each MA should be specified in the framework.
- The Enterprise Network should provide a protocol or guidelines which specify clearly what is expected of training providers with respect to training as well as assessment.

- The implementation of these guidelines should be monitored through the quality assurance and contracts management systems.

8.3 Recruitment and induction

Steps are required to ensure that young people are only recruited onto the MA programme when this is appropriate for them and their employer, and that both the young people and their employers are fully aware of the opportunities and responsibilities involved.

- The requirements regarding recruitment and induction should be clearly specified in the framework document for each MA.
- Training providers and employers should be expected to work closely together in the processes of recruitment and induction and these processes should be monitored by the Enterprise Network through the quality assurance and contract management systems.

8.4 The nature and extent of training within MAs

- The SSBs should be required to consult with employers and training providers about the nature and extent of training required within each MA, and how this should be provided. This should be reported within the MA framework document.
- MAIG should provide guidelines regarding the nature and extent of training to be provided within MAs to assist SSBs with this work.
- MAIG should scrutinise and approve the proposals regarding the provision of training in its approval of framework documents.

8.5 Improvements in frameworks

- SSBs should be requested to undertake, in co-operation with employers, reviews designed to specify more clearly the framework requirements regarding: recruitment and induction; and training. They should also be requested to identify and address problems in frameworks with respect to: the work which trainees undertake, and for which they are being trained; the appropriateness of progression routes within the frameworks (eg from level 2 to level 3); and progression routes to other qualifications (eg HNC/D or degrees where appropriate).
- MAIG should be requested to consider these issues when scrutinising and approving framework proposals.

8.6 Quality assurance and contracts management

An enhanced quality assurance and contract management system should be put in place to ensure that training providers are only funded for MA programmes if they are providing effective training and support for apprentices and employers.

- Towards this end the review of the quality assurance and contracts management systems which the Enterprise Network is undertaking is welcomed, and a QA system should be established which will include monitoring of the following issues:
  - The nature of the relationship between training providers and employers
  - Arrangements for recruitment and induction
  - Arrangements for on-going support for training of apprentices

- Assessment arrangements
- Training providers' development plans
- Qualifications and training of training providers' staff
- The contracts management system established by the Enterprise Network should be one which focuses on the quality of training and outputs from the MA programme.
- SSBs which develop their own kite marking systems for training providers should be requested to liaise with the Enterprise Network to ensure that their schemes are complementary.

8.7   Data collection and monitoring

- The Enterprise Network should be requested to establish more effective arrangements and guidelines for data gathering to ensure that the data on progression through MAs are as full as possible.
- The leaving codes, and the guidelines, for returning data should be reviewed by the Enterprise Network to ensure that the data give a fuller and more accurate account of the outcomes for leavers, and in particular that the 'other' category is a residual one, rather than accounting for 20% of all leavers.
- Mechanisms for the tracking of young people who change training providers or move to another MA programme should be established.

8.8   The role of Careers Scotland

- Careers Scotland staff should develop their links with staff within the Local Enterprise Companies to ensure that they are fully informed regarding MA opportunities in their area, and to consider how can they can most effectively help inform young people, families and schools of the opportunities associated with MAs.
- Careers Scotland should also be encouraged to work with training providers in assisting young people who wish to move out of a MA programme to move on to a suitable alternative.

8.9   A review of targets for the MA programme

- In order to achieve higher completion rates, Scottish Executive should review the targets set to underpin a high quality work based Modern Apprenticeship training system, and place greater emphasis on quality of training and outputs from the programme rather than on starts.
- Further investigations involving key stakeholders (employers, the Enterprise Network, training providers, and SSBs) should be undertaken to establish an adequate evidence base in setting these targets.

SECTION ONE   INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

This study was commissioned by the Scottish Executive to explore the factors and outcomes associated with non-completion and completion of Modern Apprenticeships (MAs). The research specification stated that:

There will be a number of factors associated with non-completion of Modern Apprenticeships. Research is required which will identify and explore these factors, and will also establish the extent to which benefits may accrue to participants in the MA programme even if it is not completed.

There is a great deal of interest at national policy level in the role of MAs in increasing competitiveness in the Scottish economy, through meeting the need for intermediate level skills in Scotland. There has been significant growth in the number of young people (and more recently those over 25) registering for a MA in the past few years, and the growth of the programme continues to be supported. The Scottish Executive, in its Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland (2003), stated that more funds would be available to increase the number of MAs.

Whilst the support for increased numbers starting MAs is strong at the policy level, this research aims to understand what happens after the point of registration, including how many do not complete, the factors associated with both completion and non-completion of MAs, and what can be lost due to non-completion or gained despite non-completion. For the purposes of this research, the definition of a non-completer is someone who started a Modern Apprenticeship but who did not complete the entire programme and who was not eligible for MA certification.

The aim of the research is to assist the Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department in addressing a number of key questions for the development of policy and practice for Modern Apprenticeships. These questions were specified in the research brief as:

- What are the factors that create barriers to completion?

- What benefits are lost to employees and employers from non-completion?

- How can the number of employees not completing a MA be minimised?

- What improvements could the Enterprise Network make to the quality of MA delivery, working with training providers?

- How can other stakeholders help to improve completion rates? eg through:
  - More relevant MA frameworks
  - More relevant qualifications

At the request of the Scottish Executive, the research only examines these research aims as they relate to those aged 16-24 at the time of registering for the MA, and who were registered for a MA through a Local Enterprise Company (rather than being privately funded).

SECTION TWO   BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1   OVERVIEW OF MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS IN SCOTLAND

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) have been available in Scotland since 1994. The aim of the MA programme is to increase the pool of people trained to intermediate level skills. MAs were originally for young adults (aged 16-24), but the upper age limit has now been removed. Funding has been prioritised, however, for 16-17 year olds under a UK-wide government training guarantee, and the funding available to those 25 and over is currently still very limited. All Modern Apprentices are expected to have employed status.

MAs are built around an appropriate Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) level 3 qualification or above. The other elements to a MA are a mixture of sector relevant SVQs/NVQs and core skills (communication, information technology, problem solving, numeracy and working with others) and, in some cases, other sector-specific qualifications. The content of the MA is described as a 'framework'. Frameworks are developed by the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC), National Training Organisation (NTO) or other sector skills body. The term sector skills body (SSB) will be used in this report to refer to these organisations. The expected length of time needed to completed a MA varies widely between frameworks (for example, construction normally takes 4 years, but customer service can sometimes be completed in a matter of months), but even within frameworks they have a flexible duration.

For funding purposes each framework has a norm plan of 'milestones'. The aim is to provide funding in line with the apprentice's progress through the MA, but although milestones exist for administrative purposes they do provide an indication of degrees of achievement of non-completers. The number of milestones on the norm plan varies depending on the framework and the length of time in which it is expected that the MA can be completed. Milestones notionally take three months to achieve. The elements that make up the units of the SVQ are spread over a number of milestones. At the start only a small number of elements are required to complete a milestone, perhaps even just one, however towards the end a milestone may require evidence of substantially more elements.

The Scottish Executive sets targets in relation to the number of apprentices in training. According to figures supplied by Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, at the end of March 2003 there were over 25,000 Modern Apprentices in training registered in the Scottish Enterprise Network and over 1500 in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Network.

There are in the region of 75 different frameworks available, each relating to a different occupational sector. Such a range indicates the move to adopt the apprenticeship model in sectors not traditionally associated with apprenticeship. Frameworks for such sectors have been described as 'non-traditional', and those in sectors in which apprenticeship has a long history described as 'traditional'. The need to shape the model to fit a range of sectors means that not only the content and length of frameworks differ, but the way in which training is provided. Many MAs, and particularly the 'traditional' MAs, involve a mixture of on-the-job and off-the-job training in a further education college or other training centre. Other MAs can involve entirely on-the-job training, although in these cases there may be a level of off-the-job training provided in the workplace by the training provider or employer.

As stated, frameworks are designed by the sector skills body relevant to the industry sector, and are approved (and re-approved at least every 2-3 years) by the Modern Apprenticeship Implementation Group (MAIG). The MAIG is made up of representatives of Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise Network, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Local Enterprise Companies, Careers Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority Accreditation Unit, Sector Skills Alliance Scotland, Scottish Further Education Training Unit and the Scottish Training Federation.

The key elements to MAIG's approval process are to ensure that the SVQ which forms the major part of the MA is appropriate and current; that the core skills are covered and are at the right level; that any other outcomes listed are appropriate for the occupation; and that there has been evidence of consultation on the content of the framework. Consultation is expected to have been undertaken with a range of employers, and sector skills bodies are encouraged to get comments during the development of the framework from the awarding body, Local Enterprise Companies, training providers and/or colleges. Consultation with trade unions, professional organisations, etc. may also take place. In cases of re-approval consultation with current or former apprentices is also encouraged.

As well as the apprentices, sector skills bodies and MAIG, other main stakeholders in the development and delivery of MAs are:

- *Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise* provide funding for training to Local Enterprise Companies;
- *Local Enterprise Companies* are responsible for administering the programme and distributing funding to training providers;
- *Employers* are expected to ensure that the training fits with the apprentice's job, to ensure that on-the-job training is provided and to support the apprentice;
- *Training providers* are under contract to the Enterprise Networks to agree provision of appropriate training throughout the apprenticeship, to assess competences, to develop individual learning plans with the employee and employer, and to administer the MA through contact with the Local Enterprise Company and by keeping the central MA management database updated;
- *Careers Scotland* has responsibility for raising awareness amongst individuals and school guidance teachers of MAs as an employment and training option;
- *Scottish Qualifications Authority* (SQA) is responsible for certification and for quality assurance in relation to awards;
- *Scottish Quality Management System* (SQMS) is responsible for quality assurance of training providers.

The stakeholders that play the most central role in terms of delivery are the training providers. It is they who have the contact with the apprentices and employers, and therefore have a great deal of responsibility in ensuring that apprentices and employers understand what is involved in the MA. While some large organisations act as their own training provider, in many cases this role is undertaken by a specialist training organisation. Smaller employing organisations have generally been discouraged in recent years from acting as the training provider because of the administrative burden involved. This means Local Enterprise Companies with few large employers acting as training providers have less contact with employers employing modern apprentices than they used to.

In this study we found that in the context of MA delivery, training providers cover a wide range of organisations and take on a variety of roles. In some cases employers organise or provide training for their own employees, in some cases training providers take some responsibility for organising or delivering training, and in other cases training providers only take on the assessment of competences. The range of training providers listed below illustrate the complexity of this aspect of the MA programme:

- Private companies that visit the workplace and assess apprentices in the workplace, but do not deliver or sub-contract any training
- Private companies that sub-contract training to colleges, and undertake assessment
- Private companies that deliver some off-the-job training, and undertake assessment
- Private companies that contract out all the training and assessment, and solely administer the programme
- Private companies that deliver in the workplace only, or a mixture of off-the-job and on-the-job training, and undertake assessment
- Not-for-profit companies that deliver some training as well as undertake assessment
- Organisations (eg councils / development companies) that put unemployed people into jobs and sub-contract the training to colleges or other training providers, but are responsible for administering the programme
- Companies with charitable status who sub-contract some training, use work-based assessors and their own trainers act as internal verifiers
- Employers who provide training and assessment in-house for their own employees
- Employers who sub-contract some of the training and do the rest in-house for their own employees
- One sector skills body undertakes a wide range of activities, including involvement in arrangements for the provision of training

Training providers range in size in terms of the number of frameworks they deliver or assess, and in terms of their geographical spread. For those large organisations operating in several Local Enterprise Company areas, the administrative burden of having a separate contract with each Local Enterprise Company led to a new system being implemented in 2002. The Lead Local Enterprise Company system means that training providers that had contracts with at least 4 Local Enterprise Companies entered into a contract with a single Lead Local Enterprise Companies. The Lead Local Enterprise Company agrees with other Local Enterprise Companies the number of MAs to be delivered in each Local Enterprise Company in which the training provider is operating. Contracts with lead training providers were allocated to Local Enterprise Companies in a way that would ensure each Local Enterprise Company was a lead for approximately the same number of apprentices. This has resulted in some examples of Local Enterprise Companies having responsibility for dealing with training providers delivering frameworks that are rarely delivered in their own area because they are not relevant to the local labour market. It can also mean Local Enterprise Companies having diminished control over the number of funded MA places they can make available to training providers in their own area for frameworks that are important to the local economy. In our research it emerged that lead training providers had a mixed reaction to the new system. Some commented that their involvement in MAs was more manageable and that the new system worked well. Others expressed concern that contact with individual Local Enterprise Companies was no longer expected, and at least one had maintained contact with individual Local Enterprise Companies as it was thought vital to the efficient running of the programme.

At the time of this study the Lead Local Enterprise Company system was relatively new and adjustment to it was still taking place.

2.2   REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There have been several recent research reports produced on modern apprenticeships. The published reports most relevant to MAs in Scotland are *Review of Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland* (SQW Ltd, 2001a) and *Review of Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland: Report of Survey Findings* (SQW Ltd, 2001b). The conclusion of these reports was that employers and apprentices found the MA model fit for its purpose (SQW Ltd, 2001a). This was based on their findings that no serious concerns were raised about the overall shape of the MA package, the content of the training or the way in which it is delivered. They also found that for young people the fact that the MA carries employee (rather than trainee) status was important and that the MA programme seems to promote loyalty from young employees, particularly those on non-traditional frameworks (SQW Ltd, 2001a).

Canning and Lang had less positive views on MAs following their study of MAs in Scotland. Whilst they acknowledged the role of MAs in encouraging the development of apprenticeships in non-traditional areas, they felt that the inconsistent understanding of what can be termed an 'apprenticeship' calls into question the quality of MAs. According to Canning and Lang, existing data do not allow one to determine the level of success of MAs in increasing the pool of intermediate level skills in Scotland. They raised particular concerns about apprenticeships in some of the non-traditional frameworks, finding that assessment, rather than training, was more common and that *"this model of pedagogy tended to provide few opportunities for formal study at college and relied heavily on the bureaucratic assessment of routine work"* (p10). Despite this, they concluded that in these sectors, *"the factors associated with this high turnover of apprentices are complex, but are much more concerned with wider labour market and societal issues than those that could be attributed to pedagogy"* (p11).

In England, where a different MA system is in operation, there have been several studies of aspects of the MA system in recent years. A principal difference of the English system is that there are two levels of MA - Foundation Modern Apprenticeships, leading to the achievement of NVQ level 2, and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships, leading to NVQ level 3. Another difference is that Key Skills rather than Core Skills make up part of the MA. In relation to the young people involved in MAs in England, Coleman and Williams' (1998) evaluation found a great variety in the backgrounds of apprentices. They found that apprentices were attracted to the MA because the training related so closely to work or because it was felt it would enhance career prospects. Coleman and Williams' survey focused on apprentices in training, the vast majority of whom were satisfied with their apprenticeship. Fuller and Unwin (2003) found that nearly half of all recruits to MAs are aged between 19 and 24, with only 20% aged 16 when they start.

Kodz et al (2000) looked at occupational progression after completing a MA, interviewing 36 young people. The numbers involved were small but they found that in construction and motor vehicles sectors, progression to supervisory roles occurred only sometime after completion of the MA, and that in business administration MA completers are likely to move into specialist areas such as accounts. Generally they found that employers place more importance on work experience than the NVQ when considering a young person for

progression. Kodz et al felt that what was shared by those who made good progress with their employer was motivation and enthusiasm, but the authors felt the MA could contribute to developing these. Fuller and Unwin (2003) were concerned that a MA such as business administration, *"is not grounded in clearly defined occupational knowledge and skills, this makes it difficult to identify the jobs which business administration apprentices are being prepared for, and hinders the development of an appropriate vocational pedagogy"* (p19). They feel that this in turn can prevent an occupational identity developing in the apprentice, and not help career progression. Fuller and Unwin (2003) also note the *"complex empirical reality where individuals move in and out of education, employment and Modern Apprenticeship in varied and often erratic ways"* (p10). Kodz et al (2000) felt that there was some evidence that doing the MA could lead some young people to take up further learning opportunities.

The focus of the majority of the English studies is on the employer's perspective. Sims et al (2000) found that the business culture of small or medium sized enterprises (SMEs) created barriers to take up of MAs rather than the value placed on this type of training. However, Anderson and Metcalf (2003) found that modern apprentices were *"comparatively concentrated among small employers"*. In terms of how the MA was viewed and what it was used for, Kodz et al (2000) found that some sectors value the MA more than others - in motor vehicles it is highly valued, but in retail a lower level training is considered sufficient. According to Anderson and Metcalf (2003), to varying extents, employers used MAs to give employees the opportunity to get a qualification, for career progression, or for staff retention. Hogarth and Hasluck (2003) found that employers generally valued MAs for the structure of training that they provided, but that *"the quality and structure of training provided in relation to the engineering and construction AMAs [Advanced Modern Apprenticeships] was incomparable to the less formal learning by doing oriented training provided in the other MAs studied in the research [retail, business administration and hospitality]"*. Fuller and Unwin (2003) expressed concern about the wide range of occupational sectors included in the MA programme in England. They felt that *"given the range of sectors which are allowed to offer the Modern Apprenticeship and the relative freedom of the NTOs to design their own frameworks, it is not surprising that there are enormous variations between apprenticeships in terms of: pay; length of training; provision of on and off-the-job training; and range of qualifications included"* (p7). The government has attempted to reduce the disparity between frameworks in terms of time to complete and requirements for underpinning knowledge through the introduction of 'Technical Certificates', developed by the NTOs or based on existing vocational qualifications. The aim of these Technical Certificates is to deliver the underpinning knowledge relevant to the NVQ through an off-the-job taught course. The aim was for all frameworks to include a Technical Certificate by August 2003.

In relation to studies on the employer's perspective, Anderson and Metcalf (2003) stated that in their study, 82% of apprentices received some off-the-job training. They found that the key skills element (similar to the core skills element in Scotland) was viewed by some employers as irrelevant to MAs. They conclude that employers' dissatisfaction with either their level of involvement in developing the training plan or the content of the off-the-job training meant they were more likely to be dissatisfied overall. They suggest these are therefore key aspects in maintaining the participation of employers in MAs. Fuller and Unwin (2003) note, however, the passivity of employers in the process and the role training providers play in encouraging employers to take on apprentices. They feel that *"the intervention of the training provider who promises to shoulder the 'burden' of recruitment, selection and official paperwork, can be very persuasive"* (p9). Overall, they felt that *"Very little is really known*

about how apprenticeship is being used and experienced in different sectors and, particularly, by individual employers. An important implication of this knowledge vacuum is that policymakers, researchers and practitioners remain almost as far from understanding how to conceptualise and construct apprenticeship to fit contemporary economic, occupational and social conditions as they did before the introduction of the Modern Apprenticeship seven years ago" (p21-22). Finally, in terms of the impact of their involvement in MAs, Kodz et al (2000) felt that to some extent employers may be encouraged by their involvement to provide other learning opportunities.

Studies on non-completion in England include a large study in which interviews were conducted with 772 non-completers who had been on the Care, Hospitality, Retail, Motor and Electrotechnical MAs (IFF Research Ltd, 2000). The key factors in non-completion that IFF found were: getting a new job, often because of better pay or prospects; the difficulty of combining training and their work; being dismissed or being made redundant; and personal issues (including a finding that 10% of female apprentices left due to pregnancy). Also significant was a lack of understanding on the part of apprentices about what the MA was and what it involved, and a similar lack of understanding amongst their employers, many of whom were new to MAs. IFF also found that despite not completing, most non-completers felt positive about aspects of the MA experience.

Anderson and Metcalf (2003) found that 78% of employers thought that completion was very important, but there was a variation between frameworks on this matter. In construction, for example, completion was seen as important, but was less important in retail, though their findings suggest that *"whilst the low level of completion may be a problem, this is mitigated by completion being higher in the occupations where this matters more often to employers"* (p vi).

Fuller and Unwin (2003) found that the majority of those leaving MAs are employed, but 11% become unemployed on leaving, most notably in traditional sectors such as construction and motor vehicles.

Little is known about those who leave the MA programme early in Scotland. The SQW study did undertake a limited exploration of reasons for leaving the MA programme through a telephone survey with 23 non-completers (2001b). Their findings give some initial information on the reasons why young people leave the MA. Being made redundant and finding another job were among the top reasons given for early leaving, as was not liking the type of work being done. However the reason for leaving was given as 'other' for a quarter of these non-completers. This is not unpacked in the report, although this is the highest category. SQW's research also states that of the non-completers, 30% left the programme with less than six months to go (the majority of this 30% with less than three months to go).

Other aspects of the two SQW reports provide valuable information on who is participating in MAs and what their experiences are. For example, there are differences in who is participating in traditional and non-traditional frameworks, particularly in terms of gender (there tends to be more males registered on traditional frameworks, and more females on non-traditional ones), and what their experiences and outcomes are in relation to the type of framework they are on. For example, it was found that non-traditional frameworks had a significantly higher percentage of non-completers (SQW, 2001b).

Particular issues are raised for those living in rural areas. Uptake of MAs in rural areas, including Highlands and Islands, is limited because of the range of provision it is possible to make economically viable in such areas. Cartmel and Furlong's (2000) research exploring youth unemployment in rural areas highlights that such young people face particular problems. For example, their study found that where the young person had to make long and complex journeys, employers could be wary about taking them on. Although youth unemployment tends to be less common in rural than urban areas, rural labour markets are characterised by low skill and insecure employment. In addition, rural employment is concentrated in small firms in which opportunities for young people to undergo training or to upgrade their skills are often limited. In relation to MA provision, it is suggested that information technology may be one way to begin to overcome such difficulties. In 2001 North Highland College began to deliver a small number of Hospitality MAs on-line.

Summary

These studies point to a range of factors that can be influential on completion, non-completion and retention in relation to MAs. Firstly, the value accorded to the MA by young people, employers and the wider occupational sector; secondly, the understanding of young people and employers of what the MA is; thirdly, the way that the training is delivered and the location in which it is delivered; fourthly, job conditions such as pay, prospects, the security of the job, and the opportunities for receiving appropriate training or experience; and finally, personal issues. These studies also suggest, however, that for some, and perhaps particularly in certain sectors, non-completion does not significantly affect career progression, or at least the ability to find work, and can still be viewed as a positive experience for those involved. In some sectors traditionally associated with apprenticeship (such as construction and motor vehicles), non-completion can be a more serious issue.

SECTION THREE   METHODOLOGY

3.1   SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

This is a national study on issues of completion and non-completion, but due to constraints of time and resources we focused on 6 frameworks and 4 Local Enterprise Companies to explore these issues.

The frameworks were chosen to provide an appropriate spread of traditional and non-traditional frameworks. They also included frameworks with a range of overall non-completion rates, but which would have a large number of non-completers potentially available to be contacted to participate in the research. We have chosen some of the most popular frameworks, which cover a high percentage of total apprentices.

The six frameworks that were selected, and which are referred to in the presentation of findings as 'the six frameworks' were:

- Business Administration
- Construction
- Customer Service
- Hospitality
- Motor Vehicles
- Retail Distribution

The choice of Local Enterprise Companies was determined by a wish to include one large urban, one medium-sized predominantly urban, a mixed rural/urban and a rural Local Enterprise Company, and a range of geographical areas. We also wished to, potentially, have a large number of non-completers that could be asked to participate in the research in the six frameworks in those Local Enterprise Companies. The result was that 3 Scottish Enterprise Network Local Enterprise Companies were chosen to meet the first three categories (Glasgow, Forth Valley and Grampian), and given the small numbers involved in MAs in individual Highlands and Islands Enterprise Local Enterprise Companies, the whole Highlands and Islands Enterprise network area was chosen instead of a rural Local Enterprise Company.

3.2   METHODS

The study draws on both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.1 Quantitative data

Existing Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Qualifications Authority data were used to provide an overview of the number of 16-24 year olds who have been involved in MAs between 2000 and 2003, completion and non-completion rates amongst this group, social and demographic characteristics of apprentices, milestones achieved and time on programme of non-completers, and some comparison of MA data with

data on other training routes. The quantitative analyses served principally to meet the first research aim of this study.

The following datasets were used as sources of these data analyses:

- A dataset provided by Scottish Enterprise Network covering all starts on all frameworks between January 2000 and January 2003. The sample size was 22,208. The dataset provided current status (in training, completer, non-completer) of each of these starts, and was used to select the 6 frameworks and 3 Scottish Enterprise Network Local Enterprise Companies that are the focus of the study, to analyse the number of milestones achieved by non-completers before they left, to calculate the proportion of male non-completers and female non-completers in the 6 frameworks, to calculate the number of people from ethnic minorities who start a MA, and to calculate the number of people registered disabled who start a MA.

- A dataset provided by Scottish Enterprise Network indicating the number of starts, leavers, proportion of leavers that were completers and the number of apprentices in training over the course of 3 financial years: 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03. These were used to indicate non-completion rates (proportion of leavers who were non-completers) across all frameworks, and across the 6 frameworks for each of those years, and an analysis of uptake and growth across the whole MA programme and within the 6 frameworks.

- A dataset provided by Scottish Enterprise Network covering all leavers in the whole Scottish Enterprise Network in all frameworks, who left between October 2001 and March 2003. This dataset was used to examine the leaving codes attributed to these leavers.

- A dataset provided by Scottish Enterprise Network covering all leavers in the 6 frameworks and the 3 Scottish Enterprise Network Local Enterprise Companies (Forth Valley, Glasgow and Grampian) who left their MA, either as completers or non-completers, between October 2001 and March 2003. The sample size was 2783. This dataset was used to examine the age of completers and non-completers at the start of their MA, and the length of time non-completers spent on the MA.

- A dataset provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise covering all starts on all frameworks between January 2000 and January 2003. The sample size was 1690. The dataset was used to indicate the proportion of non-completers who left with no achievement or with part achievement of the MA.

- A dataset provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise indicating the ethnicity of starts, the leaving codes attributed to leavers (completers and non-completers) and the time spent on the programme before non-completers left, over the course of 3 financial years: 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03.

- A dataset provided by SQA indicating the number of SVQ Level 3 certifications registered over the 3 financial years: 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03. This was used to compare SVQ level 3 certifications with MA completers over the same time period.

3.2.2   Qualitative data

Qualitative data were produced through interviews with representatives from the majority of the stakeholder groups involved in MAs at the levels of provision and policy. In total, 133 interviews were undertaken for this study. Interviews with those at the 'strategic level' were semi-structured, allowing broad themes to be developed in dialogue with the interviewee. Interviews with young people, employers and training providers were more structured, but allowed for different strands to be explored through follow up questioning depending on the responses of the interviewee. Even in these more structured interviews, interviewees were encouraged to raise issues that they felt were important. Almost all the interviews were conducted over the telephone. Interviews with all but the young people were tape recorded and transcribed. For the young people interviews, notes were taken during the interview. Interviews were analysed thematically around the aims of the research.

Interviews with Enterprise Network, Local Enterprise Companies, and Careers Scotland
Interviews were undertaken with 11 representatives of the Enterprise Network and Careers Scotland. This included staff working at both a national and Local Enterprise Company level. These interviews covered issues associated with the operation of the MA programme, and factors associated with both completion and non-completion. They also considered issues regarding possible improvements in the operation of the programme.

Interviews with sector skills bodies
An interview was undertaken with a senior representative from the sector skills body responsible for each of the six frameworks that are the focus of the study. These interviews covered issues associated with the development and operation of the frameworks in the differing context of the six frameworks involved. They also dealt with factors associated with completion and non completion, and opportunities for change. Where appropriate they dealt with implications of the change to becoming a SSC.

Interviews with training providers
Interviews were undertaken with representatives of 29 training providers involved in MA delivery and assessment. The criteria for selecting these training providers were that they were delivering at least one of the 6 frameworks in at least one of the 4 Local Enterprise Companies that form the sampling framework. A variety of sizes and types of training provider were included. In most cases, the local or lead Local Enterprise Company made initial contact with the training provider and passed the contact details on to the research team. Interviews were conducted over the telephone, tape recorded and transcribed. Each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes. The aims of the interviews were to gain a better understanding of the MA system, the training provider's own role in it and their relationship with the other stakeholders, their views and experiences on issues relating to completion and non-completion, and suggestions on improving MAs.

Distribution of interviews by type of training provider:

Private training provider	Further Education College	Council	Local Development Company	Chamber of Commerce
20	**4**	**3**	**1**	**1**

Of these 29, 5 were employers as well as being training providers.

Distribution of interviews by Local Enterprise Company:

Forth Valley	Glasgow	Grampian	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Lead*
5	5	5	6	8

*Lead training providers that operated in most or all of the 4 Local Enterprise Company areas.

Distribution of interviews by framework:

Business administration	Construction	Customer service	Hospitality	Motor vehicles	Retail distribution
15	4	12	8	6	5

The difference in totals for frameworks can be explained in part by the fact that some frameworks are mainly delivered by a few lead training providers, whilst others are delivered by a wide range of training providers of different sizes and types.

Interviews with employing organisations

Interviews were undertaken with representatives of 21 employing organisations who are currently or have recently employed modern apprentices. As data protection regulations prevented the research team from receiving contact details for employing organisations without their permission, training providers were asked to contact them on behalf of the research team and to pass on their contact details. Making contact with the named person was often difficult, and despite persistent effort a number of contacts were not made. In other cases, contact was initially made, but finding time for the interview eventually proved too problematic for some organisations. The outcome is that fewer interviews with employing organisations were undertaken than had been intended. Most interviews were carried out over the telephone (though a few were face-to-face), tape recorded and transcribed. Each interview lasted between 20 and 40 minutes.

The aims of the interviews were to find out their views on training and MAs in particular, how they recruit on to MAs, the nature of the MA training, the reasons for completion and non-completion, and whether any improvements could be made to MAs.

Distribution of interviews by employer size:

SME	Chain	Large employer	Corporate
14	4	1	2

Distribution of interviews by Local Enterprise Company:

Forth Valley	Glasgow	Grampian	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
3	4	6	8

Distribution of interviews by framework:

Business administration	Construction	Customer service	Hospitality	Motor vehicles	Retail distribution
5	3	3	4	4	1

<u>Interviews with former apprentices</u>
The intention of the research was to interview young people who were former modern apprentices, both completers and non-completers, in roughly equal numbers over frameworks and Local Enterprise Company areas. In practice, contacting young people was problematic for the research team. Data protection regulations prevented contact details being passed on to the team without the young person's permission. The initial strategy was to work through training providers who either contacted young people directly or, in the majority of cases, sent letters out to young people on behalf of the research team. Young people were offered a CD voucher if they agreed to participate. This strategy did not yield many responses, particularly from non-completers. The research team then contacted Scottish Enterprise Network and asked them to send out letters directly to non-completers in the six frameworks and three Local Enterprise Company areas (364 letters were sent), again offering a CD voucher to those who participated. This strategy produced a better response.

In Highlands and Islands Enterprise, letters were sent out directly from Highlands and Islands Enterprise to both completers and non-completers on our behalf - a strategy which did not involve training providers. This did not result in a large number of young people from the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area taking part in the study.

A total of 66 young people were interviewed for the study. Of the 66, 3 reported that they had never been involved in an MA, and a further three were still in training.

The data used in this report are from 60 young people, 25 completers and 35 non-completers. The number was almost evenly split by gender, 29 males and 31 females, with an age range of 16 - 25 years. Distribution by Local Enterprise Company was fairly even apart from in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area. Distribution by framework was more uneven.

Distribution of interviews by Local Enterprise Company:

Forth Valley	Glasgow	Grampian	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Other
16	18	18	4	4*

*These were young people who responded to our request for help, but who were not involved in a MA in one of the four Local Enterprise Company areas.

Distribution of interviews by framework:

Business administration	Construction	Customer service	Hospitality	Motor vehicles	Retail distribution
15	11	6	10	13	5

The majority of young people were interviewed by telephone, although a small number at the start of the project were interviewed face-to-face. These interviews were used to help finalise the telephone interview schedule. The telephone interviews lasted between 15 and 30 minutes, and were written up immediately after each one. The interviews explored educational and work history, reason and manner of entry to MA, experiences of MA, factors which were associated with completion or non completion, satisfaction with current situation and future plans.

SECTION FOUR   OVERVIEW OF EXISTING DATA

In this section, an overview of the operation of the MA programme in the years 2000 - 2003 is presented through drawing on a range of datasets provided by Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. It deals with the 16-24 year old age group, and Local Enterprise Company funded MAs only, and provides information on the following issues:

- Uptake and growth of MA programme
- Non-completion and completion
- Social and demographic characteristics of apprentices
- Time on programme

Data have been analysed that give a picture of these issues in the whole Enterprise Network, but large amounts of data have been analysed that relate only to the six frameworks that are the focus of this study (business administration, construction, customer service, hospitality, motor vehicles and retail distribution), and in some cases only to the three Scottish Enterprise Network Local Enterprise Companies used (Forth Valley, Glasgow and Grampian) and to Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Different datasets also cover different time periods, as outlined in the Methodology section (Section 3) and in the table titles.

Data provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is used to compare certifications of SVQ Level 3 and MAs.

The range of datasets used are described in the Methodology section (Section 3).

4.1   NOTES ON THE DATA

It is important to note that the Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise datasets are drawn from the management databases for the MA programme. These databases rely on the timely input by the training providers administering the MA to keep them up to date.

Apprentices are not tracked by the MA management database, so when an apprentice changes training provider or employer, a new record is created and they are registered as a non-completer on their former record. This may also occur when an apprentice takes a break from the MA, but later picks up where they left off. Non-completion (and start) figures are distorted by such cases. The extent to which this occurs is not clear.

Non-completion figures cannot be calculated in absolute terms without the benefit of a cohort analysis. As registration can take place at any time, and the duration of the MA is flexible, a cohort analysis is not possible using existing data, and such an analysis has not yet been carried out by Scottish Enterprise Network or Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

The data from the Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise databases are, however, acknowledged to be the most comprehensive available on MA provision, and are accepted as the most accurate data on which to base an overall picture of the programme's functioning.

4.2   UPTAKE AND GROWTH

This section provides an overview of the uptake and growth of the MA programme in terms of starts.

Table 1	Starts in all frameworks in Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise in financial years ending March 2001, March 2002 and March 2003		
	2000 -2001	**2001 - 2002**	**2002 - 2003**
Scottish Enterprise Network	9392	16406	16427
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	642	791	1685
Total	10034	17197	18112

In Scottish Enterprise Network, there was major growth in uptake of MAs between the financial years 2000-01 and 2001-02, with a consolidation in the number of new starts since. In Highlands and Islands Enterprise the period of significant growth was between 2001-02 and 2002-03 (Table 1).

Table 2	Starts in Scottish Enterprise Network (SEn) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) in 6 frameworks in financial years ending March 2001, March 2002 and March 2003					
	2000 - 2001		**2001 - 2002**		**2002 - 2003**	
	SEn	**HIE**	**SEn**	**HIE**	**SEn**	**HIE**
Business administration	1095	64	1694	66	1385	260
Construction	1564	191	1532	226	1624	252
Customer service	1444	50	2429	51	2500	227
Hospitality	756	24	1434	58	1456	133
Motor vehicles	744	52	1272	72	1134	87
Retail distribution	351	27	382	19	231	24

Table 2 indicates that patterns of growth, consolidation, and indeed contraction, can be observed in both 'traditional' and 'no- traditional' frameworks. Patterns of strong growth followed by consolidation can be observed in the 'non-traditional' frameworks of business administration and customer services, and in the more 'traditional' motor vehicles framework. The strongly 'traditional' construction framework remains one of the largest, but has been experiencing a period of relatively stable participation, and has now been exceeded by customer services for the number of starts. Hospitality, which has a mixture of 'traditional' apprenticeships such as catering, and less traditional, such as hotel receptionist, has enjoyed a period of growth, followed by consolidation. This may also be associated with the establishment of the SSC in this sector, which is underway.

Retail distribution experienced modest growth followed by contraction, and the overall numbers are very low, particularly in view of the number of young people who now work in this sector. A number of factors may be relevant here. This is a sector in which very high

rates of turnover of staff are reported. It also appears that many young people enter this sector initially as part-time employees, and the choice of it as a longer term career may take time to emerge. The framework itself has been subject to major review by the SSC to ensure that it is more in line with the needs of the industry and employers. It is also a sector where there is substantial use of in-house training by employers to meet the needs of large retail groups, and therefore many of these organisations may place less emphasis on the MA qualification.

4.3   COMPLETION AND NON-COMPLETION

Data on completion and non-completion could only be provided for Scottish Enterprise Network in this report. In the Scottish Enterprise Network data, 'leavers' refers to both completers (those who left the MA having fully completed it) and non-completers (those who left the MA without fully completing it).

Table 3	Leavers in all frameworks, and percentage of these leavers that were completers, in Scottish Enterprise Network in financial years ending March 2001, March 2002 and March 2003

	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003
Total leavers	6991	8810	13286
Completers as % of leavers	48	51	48

It can be noted that completion rates over this period are relatively stable, with a small rise to 51% in 2001-02, followed by a decline to 48% in 2002-03 (Table 3). However it can also be noted that the total number of starts increased by 43% over this period (Table 1). In this context it might be expected that the higher numbers registering for an MA would create a more heterogeneous group and that this, together with the growth in numbers, might have put additional strain on the system. In these circumstances it is interesting to note that a relatively stable completion rate has been achieved.

Table 4.	Leavers in 6 frameworks, and percentage of these leavers that were completers, in Scottish Enterprise Network in financial years ending March 2001, March 2002 and March 2003

	2000 - 2001		2001 - 2002		2002 - 2003	
	No.	% complete	No.	% complete	No.	% complete
Business administration	799	49	1028	62	1249	57
Construction	945	49	1163	62	1116	47
Customer service	1053	61	1348	46	2376	58
Hospitality	531	10	754	19	1231	23
Motor vehicles	682	44	789	38	875	39
Retail distribution	242	16	309	24	291	31

Table 4 again indicates the complexity of the pattern across the MA programme, and between frameworks which can be seen as both 'traditional' and 'non traditional'. These figures indicate that despite a difference in history of apprenticeship and training between traditional and non-traditional frameworks, there is no evidence here that this is producing major differences in completion. Although MAs in construction and motor vehicles are generally well established traditional structures, this is not leading to significantly better completion rates than those found in business administration or customer service, and indeed the completion rates in motor vehicles are considerably lower. A complex set of factors are at work here which include recruitment methods and labour turnover in the different sectors, the length and demands of the different MA frameworks, and arrangements for delivery.

It can also be noted that there has been a consistent improvement in completion rates in retail distribution and hospitality, though both started from very low proportions of completers. These are both sectors with relatively high levels of staff turnover, and these improved completion rates may reflect improvements in procedures associated with recruitment to MAs, to help ensure that the young people recruited are more likely to remain employed in the sector. They may also reflect developments within the framework and the delivery of the framework.

4.4   SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF APPRENTICES

4.4.1 Gender and non-completion

Data on gender are presented here in relation to the number of starts, and proportion of male and female starts who do not complete. These figures relate to data that include all 16-24 year olds who started in the Enterprise network between January 2000 and January 2003.

| Table 5 | Percentage of male and female total starts and percentage of male and female starts who do not complete, for Scottish Enterprise Network in 6 frameworks, who started between January 2000 and January 2003 |

	Total starts		Non-completers	
	% Male	% Female	% of male starts who do not complete	%of female starts who do not complete
Business administration	14.8	85.2	36.7	30.3
Construction	99.3	0.7	19.2	28.1
Customer service	35.4	64.6	41.2	36
Hospitality	53.5	46.5	52.3	55.1
Motor vehicles	98.9	1.1	32.1	36.4
Retail distribution	34.7	65.3	68.2	61.3

Traditional gender patterns in sectors such as construction, motor vehicles, business administration and customer service are maintained in the pattern of recruitment on MAs (Table 5). The figures here give an indication of the difficulties there would appear to be in

some frameworks for those of a gender not traditionally associated with the sector to both start the MA and then complete it. For example, in construction, not only are females highly unlikely to register for a MA, but the non-completion rate is greater than for males. This pattern is repeated across the other frameworks.

	Total starts		Non-completers	
	%Male	% Female	% of male starts who do not complete	% of female starts who do not complete
Business Administration	6.6	93.4	81.8	37.4
Construction	99.1	0.9	22	25
Customer service	33.1	66.9	56.8	33.7
Hospitality	54.2	45.8	53.4	49
Motor Vehicles	100	0	26.2	-
Retail distribution	38.2	61.8	61.9	47.1

Table 6   Percentage of male and female total starts and percentage of male and female starts who do not complete in Highlands and Islands network for 6 frameworks, who started between January 2000 and January 2003

Whilst these percentages for Highlands and Islands Enterprise are based on much lower figures than those in Scottish Enterprise Network, they show a similar pattern of male and female registrations on frameworks (Table 6). In Highlands and Islands Enterprise it seems that males are less likely than in Scottish Enterprise Network to sign on for non-traditional frameworks, and in business administration in particular the small number that do register have been unlikely to complete (these figures represent the actual figure of 9 out of 11 male starts having left without completing as at January 2003).

4.4.2   Age and non-completion

Data on this is only provided for Scottish Enterprise Network. The data give the age at the time of registration of all those who left their MA between October 2001 and March 2003, either as a completer or non-completer. The data only relate to those who left one of the 6 frameworks, and whose home Local Enterprise Company was Forth Valley, Glasgow or Grampian (Table 7).

Table 7	Number and percentage of leavers by age at start of MA who left one of the 6 frameworks between October 2001 and March 2003 as completer or non-completer				
Age at start of MA	No. completers	% of total leavers	No. non-completers	% of total leavers	Total
15	19	50	19	50	38
16	239	46.6	274	53.4	513
17	218	49.3	224	50.7	442
18	181	47.4	201	52.6	382
19	146	44.9	179	55.1	325
20	123	41.8	171	58.2	294
21	135	47.4	150	52.6	285
22	109	46.4	126	53.6	235
23	90	47.4	100	52.6	190
24	47	57.3	35	42.7	82

Apart from the small number leaving their MA at age 15, the number of leavers of each age group decreases as their age increases. This may reflect a similar pattern in the age at registration, as registration figures will be highest for 16-17 year olds for whom funding is prioritised. However this cannot be confirmed on the basis of the datasets we have. A reasonable conclusion from the percentages of leavers who are completers and leavers who are non-completers would be that age does not have any particular role to play in whether or not a young person completes their MA.

4.4.3   Ethnicity of apprentices

Data on the ethnicity of young people starting a MA between January 2000 and January 2003 were provided by Scottish Enterprise Network (Table 8).

Table 8

	Number of starts	% of population in 2001 census for Scotland
Black African	2	0.1
Black Other	11	0.02
Black Caribbean	5	0.04
Chinese	9	0.32
Indian	21	0.3
Pakistani	28	0.63
White	1497	97.99
Other	16	0.44
Prefer not to say	143	-

Table 8   Ethnicity of all starts between January 2000 and January 2003 in Scottish Enterprise Network, in all frameworks

Not including those who responded with 'prefer not to say', the total number of the sample is 1589, of which 94.2% classed themselves as 'white'. Comparison with the outcomes of the 2001 census for Scotland indicates that the proportion of those who registered for a MA between January 2000 and January 2003 who were 'white' was lower than in the general population (97.99% classified themselves as 'white' in the census).

Data on the ethnicity of young people starting a MA in the financial years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 were provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The total number of young people who registered for MAs in one of the financial years 00-01, 01-02 and 02-03, who classified themselves as 'white' was 3107, which is 99.6% of all starts over that time period.

4.4.4   Disability and MA registration

The total number of those who started between January 2000 and January 2003 in the Scottish Enterprise Network who were registered as disabled was 63.

4.5   TIME ON PROGRAMME

The time spent by completers and non-completers on the MA programme before leaving was analysed using two datasets - all those who left their MA who had been on one of the 6 frameworks in the Forth Valley, Glasgow and Grampian Local Enterprise Companies between October 2001 and March 2003, and all those that had left their MA in one of the financial years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 who had been on one of the 6 frameworks in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network.

Table 9 shows the time taken to complete the MA for a sample of 1305 completers in the Scottish Enterprise Network.

Table 9   Time taken to complete (time between registered start date and completion date) for all completers between October 2001 and March 2003 in the 6 frameworks in Forth Valley, Glasgow and Grampian Local Enterprise Companies

	Total no of completers	6 months or less (%)	1 year or less (%)	More than 1 year (%)	3 years or more (%)	4 years or more (%)
Business admin.	321	10.9	59.8	40.2	16 5	0
Construction	276	1.1	1.4	98.6	94.9	39.9
Customer service	485	51.6	83.3	16.7	0	0
Hospitality	57	1.8	35.1	64.9	0	0
Motor vehicles	142	2.1	6.3	93.7	50	7.7
Retail distribution	24	16.7	50	50	0	0

This table indicates the variability in length of MAs, both within and, more notably, between frameworks. The majority of those undertaking a construction MA completed it after 3-4 years, while over half of those completing a customer service MA did so in less than 6 months (and 12% achieved it after being registered for 3 months or less). Although the content of the framework and the way it is delivered should be the point of comparison between frameworks in different sectors in terms of their quality, these figures raise questions about the comparability of frameworks in terms of the amount of training a MA represents in different sectors.

The amount of time spent by non-completers on the programme is summarised in Table 10. The sample size for the Scottish Enterprise Network data was 1486. This sample, broken down by four time categories, gives the following outcome.

Table 10   Time spent on MA programme by non-completers of 6 frameworks in Forth Valley, Glasgow and Grampian Local Enterprise Companies, who left between October 2001 and March 2003

90 days or less	91-180 days	181-365 days	More than 365 days
26%	23.7%	26%	24.3%

The sample size for the Highlands and Islands Enterprise data was 574. The sample broken down by four time categories gives the following outcome (Table 11).

Table 11   Time spent on MA programme by non-completers of 6 frameworks in Highlands and Islands Enterprise network who left between April 2000 and March 2003

1-3 months	4-6 months	7-12 months	12 months or more
17.3%	29.1%	31%	22.6%

Both these samples (Tables 10 and 11) failed to show any clear pattern of time spent on the MA before non-completion within or between frameworks. In both cases, less than half left within the first 6 months.

4.6 COMPARISON OF MA DATA WITH THOSE RELATING TO OTHER VOCATIONAL TRAINING

4.6.1 Completion rates of Advanced Modern Apprenticeships

Completion rates for the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in England published by the Learning and Skills Council (July 2003) are calculated as the proportion of all leavers over the course of a year who completed the entire framework (therefore are calculated in the same way that the Scottish figures have been in this report). The overall completion rate is given as 26%. This is significantly lower than the completion rate in Scotland (see Table 3). The completion rates for individual frameworks include 33% for construction, 25% for 'business administration and management', 16% for 'retailing, customer service and transportation', and 19% for 'hospitality, sports leisure and travel'.

4.6.2 Pass rates of HNs

Data available from SFEFC on the qualification results for final year group award enrolments for 2000-01 indicate that 54% of HND and 58% of HNC students passed (SFEFC, 2003). While these figures are somewhat higher than those for the MA programmes, they help provide a context for the MA completion rate, and an indicator of pass rates on vocational programmes which are recruiting a fairly heterogeneous student group.

4.6.3 Comparison of MA and SVQ Level 3 data

SQA gather data on the certification of SVQ level 3 from all awarding bodies. These data include those achieving the SVQ Level 3 in the context of a MA, but in the presentation of the data those achieving it as part of a MA are not differentiated from those achieving the SVQ outside of a MA or without completing a MA. The number of MA certifications are compared in Table 12 with the number of relevant SVQ level 3 certifications over the same time period (financial years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03) for 5 of the 6 frameworks (SQA acknowledge that the data on SVQ Level 3 relevant to the Motor Vehicles MA are provided by the two approved awarding bodies and that these data may not be complete, and therefore they cannot be included here).

Table 12 SVQ Level 3 certifications and MA completions in whole Scottish Enterprise Network for 5 frameworks in financial years ending March 2001, March 2002 and March 2003

	2000-01		2001-02		2002-03	
	Level 3	MA	Level 3	MA	Level 3	MA
Business administration	856	393	881	639	811	706
Construction	417	467	443	725	843	527
Customer service	1336	646	990	621	1589	1376
Hospitality	48	52	241	144	317	282
Retail distribution	36	38	47	73	87	91

There are examples in these figures of the MA completion total being higher than the SVQ Level 3 total, which in theory should not be possible. It may be possible to explain this anomaly by the time taken between completion and certification, or by when information is passed from the awarding body to SQA, but there is not in fact a clear explanation.

The other interesting point to note are the examples in these data of the number of level 3 certifications being much higher than that of MA completions in the same sector and time period. This is particularly true of customer service and business administration, but also can be seen, for example, in construction in 2002-03. This suggests that many people achieve the SVQ level 3 outside the context of a MA, but this can in part be explained by the inclusion of all age groups in the SQA figures. The MA figures only include those aged 16-24. A further explanation of the difference in numbers may be that all three of these frameworks have mandatory requirements additional to the SVQ level 3 and core skills. In the case of business administration and customer service other factors leading to registration of the SVQ but not the MA may be that the employer or the trainee only considers the SVQ Level 3 important or necessary to the role of the trainee; or it may be a lack of awareness of the option of doing a MA; or the fact that modern apprentices are required to have employee, rather than trainee, status. An issue in construction may be that some time after the completion of the SVQ, apprentices are required to undertake a skills test, and only at that point are they considered to have finished their apprenticeship. They would therefore be certificated for the SVQ before being registered as a MA completer.

SECTION FIVE   FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH COMPLETION AND NON-COMPLETION

This section explores factors that influence whether or not young people complete the MA. It draws on data from the interviews with all groups involved in the study. It is clear from the analysis that there are a complexity of issues which are associated with non-completion and completion.

5.1   WORKPLACE CONTEXT

Having a supportive workplace context emerged as a key theme from all the interview datasets. For example, almost all the training providers interviewed responded that employers had a crucial role to play in supporting the MA process. Of the young people who did not complete the training, over one third (13) gave issues related to their workplace context as their main reason for leaving the MA. This importance is reflected in the views of one Local Enterprise Company respondent:

> *They [employers] are probably as pivotal as the young person. In the role if they are not supportive of the young person through the programme then they will never achieve. From that point of view, however, I think there is maybe some work that we, as a network, need to do to make the employer feel more involved and to let them understand the policies of Scottish Enterprise and encourage them to bring learning into their working environment from that point of view and basically…let them see the benefits to them as an organisation. But we have obviously not tended to do that proactively from an employers point of view of engaging suppliers*
> (Local Enterprise Company representative)

As this quote shows, employers play a key role in the system. However, it also suggests that employers may not understand the system, or be as active as they could be. In analysis of the data, several linked and overlapping issues emerged related to the workplace context.

5.1.1   Supervisor / manager support

Employers who took an interest in the training process and who understood the MA programme or where a key manager, for example, was particularly supportive, could be important in whether or not the MA was completed. One training provider commented:

> *..if you don't have the employers or the supervisors on your side, life can be really difficult. You know you could go into a shop to see a youngster and find that the manager has let them have the day off without telling anybody or telling the assessor I'm sorry we're too busy we can't let you in, so you really need the employer to make an effort to be on your side.*
> (Training provider delivering business administration, customer service, hospitality, motor vehicles, retail distribution)

For young people this commitment from their employer was a key aspect. For those who completed it was clearly important:

My boss is very supportive. She gives me time to complete my work, and is always asking how I am getting on
(F, completer, business administration)

The importance of employer support is also reflected in the data from the Enterprise Network interviews:

the support of the employer.... and in some cases we know it comes down to the individuals within the organisation as well, they have to have that commitment at buy-in that they will help that young person through and support them to the achievement of their qualification
(Local Enterprise Company representative)

However, although this employer support is identified as being so important by respondents, the lack of an adequate employer training infrastructure was identified as an important problem by one of the SSB respondents:

I think if you are going to be involved in training situations, the person who is responsible for the training needs to be developed as a trainer first, not necessarily as an assessor. I think that's a different issue but I think they need to be there as a trainer first and foremost and at the moment there is no requirement for that and we put people into situations where there is no qualified level of staff taking responsibility for the individual's training, and the training that is offered in the workplace can be fantastic and can be appalling, and I would like to see that system and that process much more regulated than it is at the moment.
(SSB respondent)

5.1.2   A culture where training is valued and supported

A work culture in which training is prioritised and valued can have a positive impact on completion rates. Analysis of the employers' interviews confirmed this. Those employers reporting high retention stated that they provided time for training activities to be undertaken. Those who recognised the importance of supporting apprentices provided support, including allowing them time to go to off the job training; time at work to undertake portfolio development; personal tutoring/mentoring on the job; opportunities to develop beyond the immediate work role; or giving personal counselling and advice. Where these kinds of support were provided, it was seen as an important aspect of retention and success.

However young people did not always find the workplace to be sufficiently supportive. An environment in which employers did not give support, encouragement and time to young people contributed directly to drop out, in particular in cases where the needs of the job swamped any training issues. One young man exemplifies this point. He was working in a small family run bakers, and commented on how when he started the job, his training was important to his employers. As time went on and he became more competent at his job, the interest in his training began to wane. He says:

At first they were keen on helping me, but as I got good at the job that all stopped. They just wanted the job done and when I asked for them to show me things it would

*always be: "We'll show you that tomorrow" but then they didn't. I lasted two years so
didn't have that long to go, but in the end I got so fed up I just packed it in*
(M, non-completer, hospitality)

He reports feeling that he had lost out on his chosen career (to be a baker) because of the
attitude of his employer. This highlights the need for employer support, as articulated by the
young people who have successfully completed their MA. Indeed there were a number of
cases where employer involvement could be described as passive, that is, that the employer
was not obstructive but at the same time did not take any active role in the MA process.

5.1.3 Peer support

This issue is linked to the previous one and refers to the overall culture within the workplace.
Where colleagues and peers are supportive, this can also have a positive impact on
completion. For example, in the motor vehicle framework (a traditional framework) this
support can extend beyond immediate supervisors to include others in the workplace, many
of whom would be trained mechanics themselves or in the apprenticeship programme. The
type of support is illustrated in the comment below:

*All the guys in the garage help me too. A lot of them are young and not long finished
[the apprenticeship] themselves, so they remember what it is like*
(M, completer, motor vehicles)

Conversely, one young woman who did not complete her MA in retail cited the lack of
support from her manager and from colleagues as the reason for not completing. She gave the
example of people not being willing to cover her work for her when the assessor was in, and
she talked of resentment from her peers because she wanted to "better herself" when they did
not.

5.1.4 Employment conditions, particularly low pay

The wages and conditions provided by some employers were found to result in a low level of
staff morale and to contribute to high levels of turnover. This was raised by the SSB
respondents and also raised by a small number of training providers and employers. One
training provider commented:

*we have lost a couple....on the basis of personal needs in that their requirements have
outstripped their MA pay so they have come to the point they maybe need higher wages
and are prepared to move away from the occupational area of the MA*
(Training provider delivering construction and business administration)

Employers argued that where low skilled work was available and at better pay than the
apprenticeship, this would act as a "pull" factor. Several young people, particularly those
being paid below the minimum wage, cited low wages as a "push" factor and left their MA.
As one SSB representative commented in relation to his own sector, but which would have
implications for all sectors:

I think being realistic, I think there is a whole pile of factors in there. The employer market at the moment is very buoyant. Young people have a whole pile of options. [My sector] is one of them but there is an awful lot of options there for them as well. The pay and conditions, although improving quite steadily, for example pay [in the sector] last year went up by about 14%, it's not as competitive as it should be still within the market place and young people are attracted by salaries and other factors as well. It doesn't have the best career image….
(SSB representative)

Salary increases following the achievement of a MA were considered significant by a few employers. These tended to be located in 'traditional' sectors where completing the apprenticeship marked a significant phase in a young person's working life. This is backed up by data from the young people. However, young people also talked of cases where no salary increase would be available on completion, or said that this had not been mentioned.

Similarly, the question of whether job progression would be available on completion, or even whether employment would continue to be available was, according to young people, in many cases not discussed, or dealt with in a vague manner by the employer. This happened more often in non-traditional MAs. In relation to this, job insecurity and high industry turnover (such as in hospitality and retail) were considered important factors in completion for all the interviewed groups.

5.2 TRAINING PROVIDER INPUT

Training providers emerged from analysis of all the datasets as having a key role that affected completion or non-completion. Given that employers may not see training as central to their own role, to assist them in this process training providers take on a key responsibility in the delivery of MAs. Analysis of the data, however, raised major questions as how to this role is carried out. Again several issues emerged.

5.2.1 Quality and structure of the training offered

The quality and structure of the training emerged from all the datasets as a key issue (apart from in the interviews with training providers, in which only little mention was made). There is considerable variation between frameworks with respect to how training is provided. In some cases, particularly traditional frameworks such as construction and motor vehicles, there are well established apprenticeship programmes with well structured off the job training in FE colleges or other training centres. In other cases, such as retail distribution and customer service, there may be no provision for off the job training. Analysis showed that there is a range of quality of training on offer throughout the frameworks.

Many young people who had successfully completed their MA reflected that overall the experience had been a positive one. Several commented that it had been "excellent". In these cases, those receiving on the job training reported liking the fact that the training was closely linked to their job, and felt that the training was helping them reflect on and understand their job to a greater degree.

Data suggest that on the job training can be of a very high standard, but for it to be most effective this requires input, thought and planning from the employer to make sure that the young person gets to do the type and level of tasks they need to for the MA, and also to make it a learning experience. There were several examples where young people reported very positive learning experiences in relation to on the job training, and had particular praise for their employer and training provider in this regard.

However, it was also clear that the training that some young people received was little more than a check list exercise. Several young people commented that they felt that the training was just going over what they did in work, without highlighting any learning needs or ways that they could learn from what they were doing. This was reported more often in on the job training situations. One young woman commented that when getting assessed, someone would come and go over things with her, but he would tell her the answers anyway. In summing up her experiences of her MA she said:

> It's the silliest thing I have ever done.
> (F, completer, business administration)

This point was backed up by the Enterprise Network and SSB interviews, who argued that in a number of cases training providers fail to provide effective support for the training which young people are supposed to be receiving.

A major problem, identified by a number of respondents, is that the training providers are only assessing the achievement of competences, not providing effective assistance for the young people or their employers in ensuring that an appropriate training plan is in place, that this is being regularly reviewed, and that the needs of the young person involved are being identified and met:

> …they're assessing competences in the workplace, and whether the kids have achieved these is to a large extent down to employers…
> (Local Enterprise Company respondent)

This view was reinforced by a SSB respondent:

> I think if we are looking at the commercial training providers, they themselves would say quite openly, that they don't consider themselves to be training providers any more. They consider themselves to be vocational assessment units. I think that's probably fair comment. They claim, and I think quite rightly, that the level of funding which is secured doesn't actually necessarily allow the kind of quality training that we want.
> (SSB respondent)

It has been suggested by a number of respondents that this has in part been associated with the introduction of the VQ system, where the emphasis has been on the assessment of competences.

Employers raised several issues related to quality. Some private training providers were criticised in relation to training methods adopted and visits from the training officer. In one example it was stated that tutors visited for an hour a month, at most. The employer felt that the trainees did not feel they were learning anything, and that the 80% drop out from the programme highlighted the problem. The company concerned then engaged a new training

provider whose training consultants are actually based in the employer's premises. They work side by side with the learner without interrupting the learner's work. The drop out rate has been reduced to zero.

Those receiving off the job training reported liking getting away from work, and felt that they were learning more this way. Many of those undertaking off the job training had also valued the opportunity to get together with other apprentices. For example, several of the motor vehicles completers reported liking going to college as they could meet others to 'talk about cars'. They also valued the underpinning knowledge that this gave them. As one said:

> *You need the college work. If anyone says you can be a mechanic without that then they are wrong. At work we replace things if they don't work, at college we get to understand why they don't work, and how we can fix them. You need both parts to be a proper mechanic*
> (M, completer, motor vehicles)

However, further education colleges involved in off the job training also received some criticism from employers. A number were critical of the college's support for training. One employer felt that the college did not take responsibility for the individual trainee in the way that they should, and did not recognise that the trainees were making a transition from a comparatively supportive school environment to a more adult college environment. This was especially true of trainees who were finding the college work difficult. The employer felt their needs were sometimes dismissed by college staff. Employers reported, however, that those trainees seldom valued the college aspect of the programme and much preferred to learn working on the job. Interestingly, as highlighted above, the data from the young people tend to contradict this view, as they generally report that they enjoyed college, finding it a positive and useful learning experience.

5.2.2 Continuity and communication

Several non-completers reported that there was a lack of continuity in the practice of private training providers. In a number of cases where the young person was receiving on the job training, young people stated that the training officer simply did not show up, sometimes for several months, and the apprentice was left not knowing what was going on. Several employers felt that that there was a lack of good communication with training providers. Concerns here covered the length of time it took for problems to be reported back to employers, inhibiting effective action, and a failure to engage with employers on a wider training agenda. In some cases, SSB respondents reported that there were long delays in training providers sending out staff to assess the young people, hindering progression on the MA programme, and in some cases leading to lowered morale.

There were models of good practice cited, in which there was active input from the employer, training provider and apprentice. In such cases, young people reported positive experiences and few difficulties. One SSB representative commented:

> *I think where the young person stays in the one workplace and you've got a good committed training provider and you've got a good committed employer, they will complete*
> (SSB representative)

There were also examples, however, of employers taking a rather passive role, but where, because of a good relationship between the apprentice and an enthusiastic and supportive training provider, young people completed their MA. The importance of the training provider is illustrated by these comments from young people:

I got on really well with my assessor, she was brilliant. I would never have given up as I didn't want to let her down.
(F, completer, business administration)

[Representative from the training provider] was really helpful. I could ask her not just about work but about life in general. I planned my training with her. She helped me with seeing what I could use for evidence.
(F, completer, business administration)

5.3   INDUCTION AND RECRUITMENT

Issues emerged related to the ways in which young people are recruited to the MA programme. The SSBs and Enterprise Network raised this issue, as did employers and young people. Analysis of the data showed that the role of employers in recruiting people to the MA is limited in many cases (especially where this is a separate process to the recruitment to the job). They often seem to rely heavily on training providers to undertake this task on their behalf. When asked about the role of employers in recruitment to MAs, one SSB respondent's reply was:

I think they basically hand it over [to training providers]
(SSB respondent)

In extreme cases this can result in a situation where employers are not even aware of the involvement of their employees on MA programmes. Thus the same respondent quoted above reported that there are:

Some cases as well where the employers don't even know that training providers are active in their business. Again, you have to question whether or not that's a valued process
(SSB respondent)

However it should also be noted that a number of cases of good practice were quoted by both SSB and Enterprise Network respondents which often related to good employer / training provider partnerships.

The nature of recruitment to the MA programme, and induction received at the start of the MA are, however, shown to be variable. In some cases, particularly in the more traditional frameworks such as construction and motor vehicles, recruitment to the job and recruitment to the MA are heavily linked. In these cases the young person was usually aware that they were on an apprenticeship programme. Some of the other young people interviewed had not always been aware that they were doing a MA. This quote from an SSB representative illustrates this point well about a visit to an employer:

There was about, forgive me if the stats are wrong here, there was about 10 people we discussed it with. Three of whom didn't know they were on a MA programme and two of the other 10 were actually leaving the following year and going off to university to do something completely different.....There seemed to be no value to that either for the young person going off to university or the person who didn't actually know they were doing it and I would hate to think, but I'm not naive, I would hate to think that that was widespread practice
(SSB respondent)

Data from the employer interviews show an interesting correlation between those companies who undertook a thorough induction programme and high levels of completion. Induction included issues like health and safety as well as company procedures and policy. Conversely, those companies that described poor induction programmes reported having lower success rates.

Analysis of the data from all groups showed that little use was made of the Individual Learning Plan as an active document to aid the progress and structure of the MA. Many young people did not know of its existence, not only in name but also in form. They tended, rather, to be passive documents, at times seen as an agreement between the training provider and the employer. A few models of good practice did emerge, most often when the employer or manager took a keen interest in the training of the young person. This example was provided by an employer:

I provide … the training plan. We work to a 4 week schedule, so they'll receive their induction from the agency and they'll then come to us on their first day of work and we take them then for the 4 weeks, so they're in training for the first month effectively and then they go into their teams and they settle down with the manager and then on going training is given if required or if a new skill is required if we've got something new coming out, then they'll come back into training to receive that extra training, but with their team

5.3.1   Drift or informed choice

Data from the interviews with young people show that they can drift into a MA, that is start the MA because someone (such as a training provider) suggests it to them. This is more common in the non-traditional frameworks where the idea of apprenticeship is still fairly new. One young woman when asked about how she started her MA replied:

A sales rep [the training provider] came round and said it would be a good thing for me to do, so I just started it
(F, completer, customer service)

Data from the interviews with young people show that where young people drift in, but there is structured support, it is likely they will complete. However, where there is drift and then no structured programme to hook the young person, it is likely that they will drift back out again and move onto something else. Indeed, the interviews with the young people showed that young people's lives can be very transient, with many having no clear idea of a direction they would like to take in work or training. Several cases emerged where young people had

started one MA, stopped it, then months or years later started another one in a different occupational area.

Some young people had had many jobs and differing jobs before starting the MA, though this was more prevalent in those undertaking the non-traditional frameworks. In traditional frameworks it is more likely that a sense of identity is attached to the occupation (for example, a wish to become a mechanic), often formed at a young age, which could contribute to the young person's commitment to complete their MA. However, as has been found in other research as well as in this study (see section 7.3), the consequences can be more acute for those young people who do not finish an MA in a traditional framework in terms of the progress they can make in their career or the related jobs that may be open to them.

5.4   QUALITY ISSUES

These problems with training and recruitment have led to the suggestion by a number of respondents that the quality assurance procedures currently in place are not appropriate, and are failing to help deliver a high quality training system. Thus one SSB respondent reported that:

> *The quality procedure doesn't take any interest at all in the training. Sorry, there is no quality assessment of training within the process as it stands at the moment. It is purely either focussed on assessment or it's focussed on paperwork that supports the process but nobody actually says "hang on a second. Let's have a look at that young person and see what their experience is like and let's have a look at what kind of training they're undertaking". That's just not happening. I think we've lost focus somewhere along the line of what's actually important and I have to say, I don't care particularly whether assessments are fantastic, it would seem to be much more fundamentally important that the training experience is fantastic because that's actually what imparts skills, not assessment.*
> (SSB respondent)

The same respondent suggested that there were also problems with the recruitment process, and this could be monitored more effectively through the quality assurance system:

> *I think we just need to consider how we regulate that. Training providers would be very against that because that would affect their recruitment processes and would affect the number of candidates going through apprenticeships but I've always maintained it would be better to reduce the number of apprentices and improve the quality of those who are in training than simply to have, as we do at the moment, open recruitment, suck it and see, those who survive, great and those who don't, well that's just the ways things are, which seems to be the kind of approach we've got at the moment. If we did that, perhaps we could improve the level of funding that goes to those who are recruited on this process so that they are actually getting money to be getting trained rather than simply just to be assessed*
> (SSB respondent)

Similar concerns regarding quality were reported by a further education college (delivering hospitality and business administration) which felt that the authenticity of evidence and the quality of training provision should both be monitored. Another training provider delivering

the hospitality MA suggested that the Enterprise Network should be more concerned with quality of delivery than speed of completion, and that *'they should insist that training providers give people more for their training credits'*. This training provider also felt that rather than monitoring quality, the current quality assurance system is *'all monitoring the finance and claims and milestones that have been achieved'*.

These concerns have been recognised by a number of Enterprise Network respondents who suggested that the focus of the SQMS audits had become too narrow and focused on processes rather than the quality of the training. This has led to a major review of Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS) within Scottish Enterprise Network, and the recognition that it needs to move towards becoming a system which focuses more on the quality of provision, and which encourages training providers to take more responsibility for the development of their own organisations.

These concerns over quality have also been recognised by some of the SSB respondents, and this has led one SSB to take steps to establish its own quality assurance system:

> *we are introducing across the UK, a professional registrar of employer training providers, and will be introducing a kite marking scheme, to kite mark those people we think are the best*
> (SSB respondent)

5.5 SECTORAL ISSUES AND FRAMEWORK ISSUES

5.5.1 Different approaches to training

As previously discussed, different frameworks use different approaches to training. Some have always used and continue to use off the job training, in the form of a FE college or other training provider. Others, usually the non-traditional frameworks, use only on the job approaches, which they argue are more suited to the young people's learning needs and their own sector's development:

> *you cannot treat the service sector the same way as manufacturing, because there is no background to people going to day release to colleges ....Very much within small [organisations], if you are paying them for five days a week then they expect you to be in the [organisation] five days a week, and unless we can find a way for small [organisations] to pay for the part of being out of the business and for the replacement cost of someone because of that, then it is unlikely that we are going to see much employer support for time off for learning.*
> (SSB respondent)

This is a point of debate as others, for example representatives from the Enterprise Network, have questioned whether, pedagogically, an apprenticeship can be undertaken wholly in the workplace. This raises questions about what a Modern Apprenticeship is in the current context, for example what level of training can be expected to be part of an apprenticeship, and how this should be provided. It is clear that this will vary from one sector to another, and from one framework to another. However it is not clear that criteria have been established on the basis of which these judgements can be made.

A related issue, raised by a number of respondents, particularly from the SSBs, drew attention to aspects of the apprenticeship model which were seen as being drawn from a 'traditional' idea of apprenticeship, but which were problematic within their sector. For example a SSB respondent suggested that:

> *the framework is too rigid, it's not flexible enough. It's been designed around an original concept that was based in engineering, and has not translated well into the service sector at all*
> (SSB respondent)

This raises important questions about how the concept of MA should be defined to ensure that all young people involved receive a training appropriate to their needs.

Analysis of the data also showed that there were particular issues related to certain sectors or frameworks that affected completion or non-completion. The turnover is very high in some occupational and MA areas, such as retail distribution and hospitality. This contributes to low completion rates for the MAs. This job insecurity is associated with a number of factors including seasonality, in the case of hospitality, and low level of commitment to the job as a career option among young people.

An additional problem is that in some areas, such as retail, the apprenticeship may require young people to be demonstrating supervisory skills, when they are not of an age or have had the relevant experience to do this. There are also issues about how and where the training is carried out, related to the appropriateness and quality of both on the job and off the job training. This is developed in the point below.

5.5.2 The job or role not being at the right level

According to training providers, in a number of cases the activities required to achieve a SVQ Level 3 are not ones which young people are likely to engage in (especially in retail distribution and customer service). For example one commented:

> *If the job role doesn't lend itself to the range of activities for the level 3, you know it doesn't matter on the person's abilities, if they're not doing the job you can't take them through to level 3 qualification.*
> (Training provider delivering business administration and customer service)

This was also raised by a small number of young people who received on the job training. For example, in retail, one young woman was asked to write about things in her portfolio that she didn't have the authority to do, and that were the responsibility of the manager. Those who received off the job training tended not to report such difficulties. Problems could also arise when the sector was one with little history of qualifications:

> *the people in this sector are very skilled but they are under qualified, the employers don't see the need to qualify people, they see the need to train them and skill them otherwise they would go out of business. But the need for qualifications has to be balanced with the cost and bureaucracy in achieving them*
> (SSB respondent)

One suggestion from a SSB respondent was that there needed to be another level of qualification that effectively lay between Level 2 and Level 3 SVQs, as the jump from Level 2 to Level 3 was too great. Some training providers felt that, rather than a qualification between the two levels, including a level 2 stage in the MA could be helpful:

> *if the level 2 is part of the MA then obviously the first payment point, he's kept that so there is some funding there and then also the young person at least has achieved a level 2 if they can't go on to achieve the MA*
> (Training provider delivering business administration and customer service)

Another training provider (delivering motor vehicles) said it would be good to have pre-apprenticeships (in the form of work placements for those aged 14-16 while they are still at school) so that young people could make an informed choice about whether to start a MA on leaving school. This training provider was introducing some pre-apprenticeships this year.

5.5.3 Core skills

The SSB representatives commented that the place of core skills within a number of frameworks have caused difficulties with completion, particularly given the heterogeneous group of young people involved. Core skills were considered by many training providers to be an issue that could stand in the way of completion, either because they can scare apprentices or because they are difficult to relate to the job they are doing. As one commented:

> *the sort of people we attract to the interview, they've not necessarily done particularly well at school and what we find when we are speaking to them about MAs is that yes they love the level 2 and the level 3 part but the bit that terrifies them is the core skills part because that's possibly what they've struggled with at school*
> (Training provider/employer delivering hospitality)

However, some SSB representatives commented on the value of the core skills element. For example:

> *We as an industry have got high levels of difficulties with literacy and numeracy. Employers constantly say that the problem is they can't read, they can't write, they can't speak to people. Those are the fundamentals for our industry. One of the reasons we are keen to carry on promoting apprenticeships is because of the skill element but its also addressing some of these basic skills through the core skills work that's done and that's one of the reasons we push it so heavily because we think its a very good route to access not just skills training but more basic training which the young person can certainly benefit from*
> (SSB representative)

Core skills was not an issue raised by young people. Increasingly apprentices have completed parts or all of the core skills element at school, and are exempted from this part of the MA. Other young people simply did not know what the core skills element was, and when asked about communication or numeracy, for example, they reported few problems. Employers did not raise core skills as a significant issue.

5.6   FACTORS RELATING TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE

The young people involved in MAs are a very heterogeneous group. Several factors emerged which related to the young people themselves and which can affect completion or non-completion.

5.6.1   Age and maturity

The age of the young person seems to have no relevance to completion or non-completion, as suggested by both the quantitative and qualitative analysis. However, most training providers when specifically asked about whether school leavers were mature and ready for the world of work when they started the MA, felt that to at least some extent school leavers lacked the necessary maturity and work readiness, though opinions on the extent of this were varied. One commented:

> *it's quite a big commitment for a 16, 17, 18 year old to sign up to a 4 year apprenticeship and if they move employer, it sometimes isn't that easy to continue, so they're making the commitment to an employer and an apprenticeship, so the apprenticeship might not be the problem, it's staying in the same place for that amount of time at that age*
> (Training provider delivering business administration)

As discussed earlier, it is clear that for many of those undertaking MAs there is uncertainty about their choice of career, which relates to the earlier issue of drift. Of those who did not complete the training, three young people gave the wrong choice or the work being not for them as a main reason for them leaving their MA. This can link back to the issue of induction and recruitment to the programme.

5.6.2   Their suitability for the MA programme

In most frameworks there are no formal entrance requirements, although some may have entry tests or aptitude tests of various kinds. The requirement is that the young people involved have the capacity to reach Level 3. It was questioned by representatives of the SSBs whether MA programmes are the right level of programme for some of these young people to be entering, and that this may contribute to non-completion rates. The young people involved in the study were qualified to differing levels. The majority reported having some Standard grades and one-quarter (15) as having at least one Higher. Eight of the young people (six non-completers and two completers) had left school with no qualifications. Young people rarely mentioned difficulty with the level of work in relation to non-completion. This may be, as has been found in other studies related to learning, that people do not want to report that they have a difficulty and give other reasons instead.

5.6.3   *Gender*

Both quantitative and qualitative data confirm that traditional gender roles still dominate in MAs. Although gender was not heavily foregrounded in interviews, in so far as it was raised traditional patterns of employment were reported. For example, in relation to employers in

construction, it was reported by one firm that whereas they had recruited a female joiner and a female painter in the past, they had no young women at all in current employment. The qualitative interviews with young people revealed one instance where gender had played the most important role in the MA journey. This was in the case of a female mechanic who was having great difficulty getting garages to take her on because she was female (she wrote to a national newspaper about this). This meant that her MA was interrupted several times (she was recorded as a non-completer on the Scottish Enterprise Network database), but she was determined to finish and eventually found a garage where she was respected and felt comfortable, and at the time of interview was on the brink of completion. This shows that the determination of the young people themselves can also play a role. Determination was cited by a small number of young people as the main factor which got them through their MA when they were not receiving much workplace or training provider support.

5.6.4   Personal lives of young people

Training providers commented on a wide range of issues in the personal lives of young people that can have an impact on achievement of the MA (eg pregnancy, problems at home). Three young people gave problems at home or an issue in their personal lives as affecting completion of MA.

Although some employers remarked on the likelihood of personal difficulties having an impact on employment and training, few employers could actually specify instances. One employer was able to identify that for one apprentice personal circumstances were alone responsible for non-completion, while others offered more complex pictures. For example, two employers in comparatively remote areas were acutely conscious that young people would be drawn to leave the area in search of more interesting, better-paid employment or a more exciting life style. Of the young people interviewed, one non-completer cited moving to a different area as the reason she did not complete. One employer acknowledged that given the impact of problems at home, which they believed to be likely for young people of that age, it was important to pick up on issues such as lateness or absence because young people seldom offered information on personal problems until it became too late to address them.

Although employers took different attitudes to the impact of personal problems in relation to completion some have made serious efforts to provide support for young people with, for example, family problems, either through a mentoring system or through in-house counselling support. Some have gone further and offer a comprehensive 24 hour counselling service.

Several training providers commented on the influence that peer groups outside of work can have. If their friends are not working, it can make some young people less committed to the job and the MA; or if they know of people their age earning more, they may leave for higher wages. Several young people, particularly those on very low wages cited this as a problem as they wanted to have the money to go out with friends but couldn't afford to do this. For a small number this had resulted in them leaving the MA.

Some training providers saw parents as potentially important in encouraging young people to achieve the MA.

I think that parents are key to this. I think parents often don't know about the MAs or if they do think it's of no value. If we get to the parents we might be able to influence the young people to come on board and stay on board.
(Training provider delivering hospitality)

For many of the young people, parents had been pleased that they were on the MA programme as it meant the young person was getting a trade, or a recognised qualification. In relation to ongoing parental support, those who were a bit older, often no longer living at home, did not cite this as so important. However for younger apprentices, parental support had often been important in them completing the MA. Several told of parents helping them in the evening with work.

5.6.5   Incentives

Some employers or training providers gave the incentive of a financial reward to young people who complete. This can take various forms in addition to salary increases. Sometimes with and sometimes without support of the Local Enterprise Company, completing individuals are given a sum of money (£150 seems typical). This is often made at a public celebration of their achievement where management and other key partners are present and often reported in in-house publications or circulars. These types of public celebration also took place in cases where no financial incentive was involved. Data suggest that only in a few cases was such a financial incentive the prime reason for young people completing. Other companies gave other incentives, such as an ongoing tools allowance for those who were progressing well (in motor vehicles). This contributed to completion, but factors such as employer and training provider support outweighed these in relation to whether the young person would complete or not.

5.7   THE ROLE OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

5.7.1   Factors associated with Careers Scotland

Data analysis showed that careers guidance can have a key role to play in affecting completion or non-completion. Several training providers felt that MAs were not being well promoted, and that the emphasis has been on encouraging school leavers to undertake further academic rather than vocational education.

Young people had often not heard of MAs before they had started on one, and overall did not have positive things to say about the careers guidance they had received. The consequences of this were considered to be that young people would choose an MA without really understanding what it was, or knowing whether the sector or type of job was right for them, which could in turn affect whether or not they completed.

5.7.2   Factors associated with the Enterprise Network

It is clear that the Enterprise Network has a key role in the development and administration of the MA system. An issue that was identified which might contribute to non-completion was that the funding system operated by the Enterprise Network and the targets set may

encourage training providers to place young people on MAs, although some of these young people might be better placed on other programmes, such as Skillseekers. For example:

> *there is always an incentive for training providers to put kids on MAs because they get more money for them*
> (Local Enterprise Company respondent)

In addition, Enterprise Network targets have traditionally emphasised starts, rather than completion rates:

> *it's only fairly recently that anyone has been looking at the number of starts, and comparing the numbers of achievers with that, it was always starts*
> (Local Enterprise Company respondent)

Some training providers commented on the complexity of the system, and how their own role may be improved by clearer guidance being provided to them:

> *when we contact people, people have always been very helpful, but sometimes it's not about the help that you get when you get there, it's about knowing who to contact in the first place and what questions you need to ask and if something isn't set out with all the various arms and legs that are attached to this, you can miss something quite easily.*

Only a small number of employers reported finding the system complex, the majority reporting that they understood it, or more often that they left it to the training provider to understand it for them. It was the training provider who usually provided the link to the Local Enterprise Company, the SSBs and the awarding bodies.

Summary

The data show that factors associated with non-completion and completion are complex. A supportive workplace context emerged as a key factor in completion from all of the interview datasets, including interested and committed employers and supervisors, time being made available, a culture in which training is valued, and peer support. Wider sectoral issues, such as the stability of employment and the level of wages, were also important issues in many cases.

The quality of the training is crucial to whether or not apprentices complete. The responsibility of ensuring good quality training falls on both the employer, who should ensure that opportunities to undertake the required type and level of work are available, and the training provider. The role of the training provider is crucial, as it was found that even in cases where there was little employer support, a good relationship between the apprentice and training provider/officer could ensure that the MA was completed. Although many good examples of practice by training providers emerged in the research, which had been vital in the apprentice completing the MA, a significant issue relates to the many cases where no training, just the assessment of competences, is taking place. The appropriateness of an apprenticeship model that has been imported from the 'traditional' sector into new areas emerged as an issue, particularly in relation to the type of training and how it is delivered. This raises fundamental questions about what an apprenticeship is for and how it can be

defined. The existing quality assurance procedures did not appear to be adequately monitoring the training and assessment processes.

Other key factors associated with completion and non-completion include recruitment, induction, and the extent to which involvement in the MA is an informed choice on the part of both apprentices and employers. In relation to young people, the appropriateness of the MA for them, their readiness to commit to a career route, personal characteristics and factors in their personal lives can also be associated with completion and non-completion.

SECTION SIX ACHIEVEMENTS AND DESTINATIONS OF
NON-COMPLETERS

This section brings together data on achievements and destinations of non-completers from a number of sources, including data from Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, data from Scottish Enterprise Glasgow and data from the interviews carried out with non-completers.

Existing data are limited and not completely satisfactory in providing detailed information on the issues of achievement and destinations. A better informed analysis of these issues would be aided by a change in the data that are routinely collected by Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

6.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

6.1.1 Milestones achieved by non-completers

Data on the number of elements or units of the SVQ that are achieved by non-completers are not currently recorded on the central management database for the MA programme. The data available that can give some indication of what non-completers achieve are those on milestones.

Scottish Enterprise Network
Data on the number of milestones achieved by non-completers before they left the MA programme in the Scottish Enterprise Network are drawn from the dataset of all those that started their MA between January 2000 and January 2003, and who, as at January 2003, had left their programme without completing.

All frameworks are made up of a series of milestones. Completion of the first milestone may mean that as little as one element of a SVQ unit has been completed. Later milestones usually require a greater volume of achievement.

The number of milestones that make up each framework vary both between and within frameworks. In this dataset the number of milestones ranged from two to 18. In order to keep the data presented relatively simple, the data have been broken down into three categories: those who achieved no milestones; those who completed at least one milestone; and those who completed at least half of the milestones on the plan. Those who achieved no milestones and those who achieved at least one add up to 100% of the sample. Those who achieved at least half of their milestones are a sub-group of those who achieved at least one milestone.

These data are based on a sample of 4963 non-completers (Table 13).

Table 13   Percentage of non-completers who started between January 2000 and January 2003 in Scottish Enterprise Network on all frameworks who achieved 0 milestones, at least 1 milestone, or at least 50% of milestones before leaving MA

0 milestones completed	At least 1 milestone completed	At least 50% of milestones completed
50.8%	49.2%	12.8%

Table 14   Percentage of non-completers who started between January 2000 and January 2003 in Scottish Enterprise Network on 6 frameworks who achieved 0 milestones, at least 1 milestone, or at least 50% of milestones before leaving MA, and most common number of total milestones on plan

	Most common number of milestones on plan	0 milestones completed	At least 1 milestone completed	At least 50% of milestones completed
Business administration	8	50.4%	49.6%	15.3%
Construction	9	51.6%	48.2%	10.6%
Customer service	4	51.5%	48.5%	23%
Hospitality	12	50.4%	49.6%	20.6%
Motor vehicles	14	50.8%	49.2%	3%
Retail distribution	9	50.5%	49.5%	8.7%

There is a remarkably consistent proportion of non-completers with no achievement and non-completers with part achievement across frameworks (Table 14). There is a greater variety in the proportion of those achieving at least half the milestones before leaving (this figure is of course a sub-sample of those achieving at least one milestone). It might be expected that those who need to achieve fewer milestones would be more likely to complete half of them, but the figures show that is not the case. It is interesting to note that the hospitality MA, which has poor completion rates overall, has relatively high levels of non-completers achieving at least half the milestones on the plan. Issues of seasonality, resulting in apprentices only being able to stay for a certain period of time, may be relevant here.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Data on non-completers in Highlands and Islands Enterprise were provided for two categories: those who left their MA with no achievement and those who left with part achievement (Table 15). These data relate to all those who started their MA between January 2000 and January 2003, and who as at January 2003, had left their programme without completing. Given the small numbers involved for individual frameworks, only an overall breakdown is provided here. The data are based on a sample of 713 non-completers.

Table 15	Percentage of non-completers who started between January 2000 and January 2003 in Highlands and Islands Enterprise, who left with no achievement or part achievement

No achievement	Part achievement
65.2%	34.8%

This shows a higher proportion of non-completers with no achievement than in Scottish Enterprise Network.

The existing data on achievements of non-completers is limited. The data suggest that milestones are not an adequate way of analysing achievement. Furthermore, part-certification is not usually provided to non-completers who achieve part of their SVQ, though it is in theory available to them. In the interviews with young people there were examples both of non-completers who had received part certification and those who had got very close to completing but had received no certification. Interviews with non-completers generally showed a lack of awareness of what aspects of the MA they had achieved. Part certification could play a part in making the benefits from achieving part of a MA as transferable as possible to assist career development. It could also help young people be clear on what they have achieved.

6.1.2   Interviews with non-completers

Interviews with non-completers provided the following information on achievement. 18 out of the 35 (51.4%) were aware of having completed some of the MA, ranging from a few elements of the SVQ to near completion of the MA. The remaining 17 (48.6%) either reported that they had achieved no part of the MA or SVQ or that they did not know if they had achieved any part of it.

The figure of 51.4% is similar to the overall figures on part achievement amongst non-completers in the Scottish Enterprise Network area (the area from which almost all of interviewees undertook their MA) (see Table 13).

Both sets of data support the assertion that approximately half of those who do not complete their MA in the Scottish Enterprise Network achieve some part of it, though the amount that they achieve is variable.

6.2   DESTINATIONS

Destinations of non-completers (and completers) are not explicitly recorded on the central management database for the MA programme. However, some information is indirectly available on this through the recording of leaving codes.

6.2.1 Leaving codes

A reason for leaving is entered on the Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise databases for all those who leave their MA, as completers or non-completers. It should be noted that in most cases, it is the training provider who selects the code from a selection provided by Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, though some Local Enterprise Comapnies take responsibility for selecting it. As can be seen from the range of leaving codes, there are instances where it would be possible to have a choice of more than one leaving code (for example, for those who complete and stay in employment, either 'completed course' or 'found or remaining in full time employment' would be appropriate), but we are unable to say how often and in what way such choices are made.

Scottish Enterprise Network
13 leaving codes are used by Scottish Enterprise Network. The following data relate to all those in Scottish Enterprise Network who left their MA between October 2001 and March 2003 (Table 16).

Table 16   Leaving codes attributed to all leavers in all frameworks in Scottish Enterprise Network who left between October 2001 and March 2003

	No.	% of total sample
Completed course	6004	37.6
Vocational Qualification progression	22	0.1
Change of vocational qualification	830	5.2
Transfer to another Training Supplier / Funding organisation	241	1.5
Entered further ft education or training	288	1.8
Found/ remaining in full employment	3567	22.3
Found voluntary work	5	0.03
Unemployed	729	4.6
Dismissed	804	5
Health (excess of 3 weeks sickness)	157	1
Serious injury	16	0.1
Death	16	0.1
Other	3294	20.6
Total	**15973**	**100**

The range of leaving codes and the large proportion of leavers attributed to the 'other' category indicate a complex picture of the immediate destination of those that leave their MA. Taking the first five categories together, 46.2% leave their MA either having completed it or to continue some sort of training. A further 22.3% are recorded as having either found or remained in full-time employment, though interviews with young people in the course of this research suggest the employment that they are entering or in which they are continuing will not always be a job with opportunities for career progression or for training. However, it can also be noted that less than 10% are recorded as being unemployed or dismissed.

The leaving code attributed to a fifth of this sample is that of 'other'. Given the range of options available, it seems at first surprising that the 'other' option is used so frequently. However, in at least one Local Enterprise Company this option is in part used as a way of removing from the live register those young people who have completed all their coursework and assessments and are awaiting certification, as the time from completion to certification can be a matter of months. In this case, the 'other' category is being completed by the Local Enterprise Company and being used to keep the 'in training' figures accurate.

An analysis of the reason for leaving of those included in the 'other' category was undertaken by Scottish Enterprise Glasgow in relation to 49 leavers in that Local Enterprise Company. This showed that 14 (28.6%) had changed vocational qualification and 7 (14.3%) had transferred to another training supplier or funding organisation (a total of 42.9% who had continued some form of training). 2 leavers (4.1%) had left because of the job. 2 had left because of misconduct, and another 2 had moved away. 7 (14.3%) had 'left voluntarily', though the reason that they did so is not given. Finally, for 15 (30.6%) of them the reason for leaving was unknown. These findings suggest that the 'other' category can be used in a variety of instances, including in cases where another leaving code would have been appropriate. They also suggest that recording the reason for leaving is problematic in some cases.

Table 17   Number and percentage of leavers between October 2001 and March 2003, for each of the 6 frameworks in the Scottish Enterprise Network, by leaving code
Column Percentages

	Bus		Con		Cus		Hos		MV		Ret	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Completed course	704	41.1	862	47.5	1216	44.6	174	11.8	418	30.4	76	18.1
Vocational Qualification progression	4	0.2	1	0.1	0	0	2	0.1	1	0.1	2	0.5
Change of vocational qualification	88	5.1	41	2.3	49	1.8	120	8.1	126	9.2	28	6.7
Transfer to another Training Supplier / Funding org.	9	0.5	13	0.7	17	0.6	27	1.8	76	5.5	2	0.5
Entered further ft education or training	28	1.6	7	0.4	63	2.3	47	3.2	16	1.2	12	2.9
Found/ remaining in full employment	469	27.4	206	11.3	605	22.2	546	37.0	245	17.8	123	29.4
Found voluntary work	1	0.1	0	0	0	0	2	0.1	0	0	1	0.2
Unemployed	63	3.7	161	8.9	73	2.7	94	6.4	71	5.2	37	8.8
Dismissed	34	2.0	190	10.5	41	1.5	52	3.5	200	14.5	6	1.4
Health (excess of 3 weeks sickness)	12	0.7	28	1.5	25	0.9	18	1.2	12	0.1	4	1.0
Serious injury	0	0	11	0.6	1	0.04	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	0
Death	0	0	7	0.4	1	0.04	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	0
Other	301	17.6	288	15.9	634	23.3	391	26.5	210	15.3	128	30.5
Total	1713	100	1815	100	2725	100	1475	100	1377	100	419	100

Bus = Business Administration; Con = Construction; Cus = Customer Service; Hos = Hospitality;
MV = Motor Vehicles; Ret = Retail Distribution

The destinations recorded for leavers in each of the 6 frameworks studies is reported in Table 17. Comparing these percentages to those for the overall sample, the low level of completion in both hospitality and retail and the related higher percentage remaining in full-time employment is notable. The 'other' category is also high in both of these frameworks.

The percentage who are dismissed is noticeably higher for motor vehicles and construction than it is for the overall sample. The other figures that seem to differ noticeably from the overall sample are the proportion recorded as changing their vocational qualification who had been on a MA in hospitality or motor vehicles.

Although covering different time periods, the time periods for these data and the data on the proportion of leavers who are completers do overlap, but the figures here on completers are generally lower than in Table 3. This may be because it would be possible for those who completed the MA to be entered into a category other than 'completed course' (such as 'remaining in full employment'). In at least one Local Enterprise Company that took responsibility for attributing a leaving code to leavers, there has been some confusion in the past over which of these two categories to use.

The uncertainties which are a feature of these data reinforce the need for clarity in the guidelines for data collection. This also leads to the need for caution in interpreting the data. However, certain patterns do emerge as relatively consistent, with business administration, construction and customer service recording higher completion rates than the other frameworks, a finding which fits with other data (see Table 4).

Highlands and Islands Enterprise
In Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 13 leaving codes are used, which differ from those used by Scottish Enterprise Network. The training provider is responsible for attributing a leaving code to leavers. We are only able to provide data on leaving codes in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area for 6 frameworks. The data relate to all leavers in the financial years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 (Table 18).

Table 18   Leaving codes attributed to all leavers in 6 frameworks in Highlands and Islands Enterprise network who left in one of the financial years 2000-01, 2001-02 or 2002-03

	Bus	Con	Cus	Hos	MV	Ret	Total
Completed training	53	3	29	8	4	3	**100**
Transferring scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Entered FE /training	4	1	1	2	0	0	**8**
Work found	1	0	1	2	1	0	**5**
Changing career plan	14	12	21	5	1	5	**58**
Found voluntary work	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Leaving area	9	1	2	11	1	0	**24**
Unemployed	3	5	0	2	2	4	**16**
Unhappy with training	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Injury	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Death	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Destination not known	8	16	1	11	4	6	**46**
Other	11	1	9	14	2	5	**42**
Total	**103**	**39**	**64**	**55**	**15**	**23**	**299**

Bus = Business Administration; Con = Construction; Cus = Customer Service; Hos = Hospitality;

MV = Motor Vehicles; Ret = Retail Distribution

Of the full sample of 299 leavers, 36.1% were reported as having completed or continued training (33.4% completed their MA and 2.7% entered FE / training). A notable difference between the Highlands and Islands Enterprise data and the Scottish Enterprise Network data is that only 1.7% of the whole Highlands and Islands Enterprise sample were reported as having found work. It may be that the category 'changing career plan', which suggests that the apprentice has moved out of the sector in which they were doing the MA, is being used in cases where work is found that is unrelated to the MA. A relatively small proportion, similar to that in Scottish Enterprise Network, are reported as being unemployed on leaving (5.4%). However, and this helps underline the difficulty in reporting the destinations of MA leavers, 15.4% are reported as 'destination unknown' and 14% as 'other'. Again, the need for greater consistency in the way that guidelines on data input are provided and used is clear.

6.2.2   Interviews with non-completers

The interviews with non-completers provided the following information on destinations: twenty-four (68.6%) were in some sort of employment at the time of the interview; ten (28.6%) were unemployed at the time of the interview; and eight (22.9%) were in some form of education or training (three of these were doing another MA and so are also counted in the 'employed' figure).

The percentage in employment is a great deal higher than those in Table 16. However, those who are working can be attributed to other leaving codes than 'found/remaining in full time employment'. There are part-time workers included amongst the interviewed sample, who would not be described as in 'full time employment'. There is also the important issue that the interviewed sample was self-selecting, and so may be biased towards those who are more comfortable with what they are currently doing. It should be noted, however, that five of the employed non-completers in low paid and low status jobs, stated that they were not satisfied with what they are currently doing. The impact of both non-completion and completion on career progression is discussed further in section 7.3.

Amongst the interviewed non-completers, 11 (31.4%) had definite plans to return to some form of education or training. 3 others (8.6%) had since completed another MA. In total, 23 interviewed non-completers (65.7%) said they would be interested in doing another MA, were due to start another MA soon, or were planning to return to complete their MA soon. Some of those who said they might do another MA said that it would depend on it being in a sector that they wanted to work in, or if there was better support available to them. So for 65.7% of the 35 non-completers doing another MA was a possible or definite option.

Summary

In terms of the achievements of non-completers, the data that are currently collected do not provide explicit information on how many elements or units of the SVQ are completed, nor whether any other elements of the MA are completed. It is therefore not possible to be precise about what non-completers are achieving. Data on milestones provides some indication of how much of the MA non-completers achieve. For each framework, each milestone will mean something different in terms of how many elements have been achieved, and this can also vary within the framework. A more detailed analysis of what each milestone means for each framework was outwith the scope of this study. However, it is possible to state that approximately half of non-completers in Scottish Enterprise Network complete at least one milestone of the MA, and that 12.8% of the sample from the database completed at least half of their milestones. The figure for those completing at least one milestone is reinforced by the findings from the interviews with non-completers. In Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the part achievement figure is lower than in Scottish Enterprise Network, and the limited participation of non-completers from Highlands and Islands Enterprise does not allow us to add anything to this finding. In cases where part achievement occurs, there will be instances where the non-completer receives part certification, which could be a transferable benefit of participation in the MA, but it is possible that this is only a rare occurrence, as there is no obligation on the part of the training provider (or an employer acting as the training provider) to register part achievement with the appropriate awarding body.

In relation to the destinations of non-completers, there are existing data available in the form of leaving codes. Though the aim of these is to provide the reason for leaving, in doing so an indication is given of the immediate destination (in terms of activity) of some leavers, particularly those who were not classed as completing their MA. 8.6% of those who left in Scottish Enterprise Network in our sample did so in order to go on to other training. 22.3% left because they had found or remained in full-time employment (it is possible that some of these were completers). 4.6% left because they were unemployed and 5% because they were dismissed. Amongst our interviewees, the percentage employed (including part-time employment) was 68.6%. This is high compared to the figure given in the Scottish Enterprise

Network leaving codes, but so is the unemployed percentage amongst our interviewees (28.6%). The existing data and interview responses provide a confused picture on the destination of non-completers in terms of whether or not they are employed, though they do indicate that leaving a MA does not necessarily lead to unemployment, nor is it in many cases due to unemployment. Those who leave their MA without completing may do so because they wish to change the training that they are doing. From the interview data, it emerged that in cases where a change of training was not the reason for leaving and may not have been the immediate destination of non-completers, some non-completers do start another type of training at some point after leaving the MA. It was also found that, in many cases, an unsuccessful attempt at a MA does not put off young people pursing a different MA or restarting the MA (65.7% of the 35 interviewees). This suggests that a MA is seen as a valuable option by a significant percentage of non completers.

SECTION SEVEN   BENEFITS LOST AND GAINED IN CASES OF NON-COMPLETION

An aim of the research was to evaluate what benefits may be lost to employers and employees in cases of non-completion of the MA. A related issue is whether there are benefits that can be gained by employers or employees despite non-completion. The issue of 'benefits lost' was generally a difficult one for respondents, presumably because of the hypothetical element involved, though experiences with past apprentices were helpful in this for some. On the basis of interviews with various stakeholders, the following points emerged.

7.1   ROLE OF MAS IN MEETING BUSINESS NEEDS

Employers presented quite different perspectives on the contribution of MAs to the work of the organisation. Where a particular apprentice had learned quickly and was able to contribute to the work of the employing organisation the loss of an apprentice was keenly felt by some employers. However, where this was not the case employers did not report significant concern.

Employers in the hospitality sector, where movement between jobs is common, did not express serious concern about the loss of apprentices. Seasonality and the rural location of some of the hotels of which representatives were interviewed both contributed to an acceptance by employers of the high turnover of staff. Their capacity to recruit replacements was more of an issue.

Also in relation to the hospitality sector, one of the training providers interviewed stated that MAs are needed to support the hospitality industry, as one of the few funded programmes training providers and employers can now access, which suggests the hospitality industry is losing out if they do not get young people into the programme. Training providers do value the hospitality MA for reasons other than the funding, and through that the opportunities for recruitment, that it provides. One commented on the good management skills that doing the MA develops, which is something that young people may not have the opportunity to develop if the MA ends early.

Another view given by a training provider delivering business administration was that not completing a MA may meet business needs. This training provider stated that employers can be strategic about what training they offer depending on whether they think the training will lead them to lose a good employee or vice versa. It is not possible to say how common this type of 'strategic' thinking is, but it suggests that MAs are not always used by employers for the goals that they are intended. This raises interesting questions about whose needs should take priority.

It was reported that in the retail sector some large employers are more interested in training their employees, often on in-house programmes, than in gaining externally recognised qualifications, particularly if there are costs involved with certification.

7.2   FINANCIAL LOSS RELATED TO NON-COMPLETION

With a large chunk of funding only available to training providers on completion of the MA, non-completion may be seen as a loss financially, though a more detailed analysis of the funding issue would be required to see how significant an impact that has on training providers. From the point of view of employers, there were a variety of responses in relation to the cost of training, depending on the level of financial contribution required by the employer. For example, one employer in the high tech sector estimated that it cost £1600 to put trainees through an induction for four weeks. This did not include any costs specific to MA training. On this basis alone non-completion became a significant problem for them, and had an impact on their recruitment strategy by pushing the company towards older applicants (a group for which little MA funding is currently available).

The financial cost, as well as the perceived bureaucracy, of getting qualifications certificated was suggested by a SSB respondent as a factor in whether or not the young person received the transferable benefit of a certificate. This respondent remarked on situations where the employer was not willing to incur the cost of getting qualifications certificated.

7.3   ROLE OF MAS IN HELPING CAREER PROGRESSION

In terms of the benefits lost or gained for the young people involved who do not complete, some employers felt that the young person would benefit from the experience they had gained and be able to continue their programme elsewhere, perhaps with a better understanding of what was required to complete the programme and perhaps a more stable environment in which to complete it. This was particularly the opinion of employers in the hospitality sector, where high turnover of staff is expected and largely accepted.

Several training providers commented that some young people leave the MA because they can earn more money in the short term in another job, but that in the long term they may end up earning less. In these cases career progression, at least in terms of earnings, can be hampered by non-completion.

A specific example of the impact of non-completion on career progression was provided by a training provider delivering the motor vehicles MA. Non-completion prevents the trainee getting the banding they require, and so would have a serious effect on the progression of their career. In a similar manner, completing a MA in one of the construction specialisms can be necessary to become a qualified tradesperson.

There are differing views from the young people interviewed as to the ways that non-completion of the MA had affected their career progression. Although the majority of those who had not completed were in work or in other forms of training or education, just over a quarter of the non-completers were unemployed. Some of these unemployed non-completers felt they had lost out on the opportunity for a chosen career. Half of these young people, along with five other non-completers who were working, but in low paid and low status jobs, responded that they were not satisfied with what they were currently doing.

Only one interviewed completer was not in work or in training/education, which suggests that completing the MA was a benefit, especially since the vast majority were working in an area related to their MA. Just under three-quarters of completers responded that they could not

have got to where there were without the MA. In the traditional frameworks such as motor vehicles and construction this was especially important, as "getting a trade" was equivalent to achieving the apprenticeship.   In non-traditional frameworks, particularly business administration, some young people told of how they had gained a career or promotion and attributed this directly to successful completion of the MA.

The MA, however, had not contributed to the careers of all completers. Just over a quarter (7) responded that they could have got to where they were without the MA (they were almost all in non-traditional frameworks). Several completers did comment, however, that they felt having the MA might help in the future when looking for promotion or a new job.

The issue of tracking was raised by some training providers. One training provider felt that awarding bodies could and should document why people leave and what units of accreditation they can get, and another that those who leave should be tracked and redirected, which currently does not happen as, according to this training provider, neither the employer nor the training provider are interested. Careers Scotland indicated that this was an area of work which they would like to develop.

7.4   LACK OF UNDERSTANDING/AWARENESS OF WHAT THE MA IS

This was an issue that was found to contribute to non-completion, but can also be important in whether or not employers and apprentices recognise what they may lose if they do not complete the MA. Several training providers felt that employers do not always understand what a MA entails, and what they can get out of it. In those sectors where the MA is not yet well recognised, such as hospitality, one training provider found that often young people start referring to the SVQ rather the MA after a while, because they see the SVQ as more beneficial to future employment due to its better recognition amongst employers. One training provider delivering business administration and customer service felt that trainees do not see the benefit of doing the MA until the end, so they may not be aware of benefits lost to them if they leave early. Another felt it was important that young people know that they will come out of the MA as a fully qualified tradesperson.

7.5   QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

The data on the number of milestones completed by non-completers contribute to some extent to exploring this issue.

As discussed in section 6.1.1, half of those who leave in Scottish Enterprise Network (and a third who leave in Highlands and Islands Enterprise) without completing achieve at least 1 milestone, so at least one element of the SVQ, and although there is a large variation in this across frameworks, in all frameworks combined in Scottish Enterprise Network 12.8% of non-completers achieved more than half of the milestones for their MA before leaving (see table 13). This suggests that there are skills being developed by non-completers that could be transferable to working or training undertaken after having left the MA programme.

Over half of non-completers in Scottish Enterprise Network and Highlands and Islands Enterprise left after the first 6 months (see Tables 10 and 11). This suggests two things - that useful skills and experience may be gained even by those who do not complete, because of

the time they have spent working (though the extent of the usefulness of the experience will depend on the nature of the job); and that employers and apprentices are often investing a significant period of time towards the MA without it being completed, which may mean a missed opportunity and benefits lost for both parties.

Summary

Key points in relation to the benefits that can be lost to employers are that non-completion of the MA, when the young person leaves the organisation, can mean losing a valuable employee, though this view seems to differ somewhat across sectors. Employers may also incur financial costs through non-completion. The benefits lost to young people can be that they do not have the opportunity to develop certain skills, and their longer term earnings may suffer. They may not receive recognition for what they do achieve, which can make transferring what they did achieve and learn more difficult. In terms of being able to pursue a chosen career, not achieving the MA can have a serious impact, particularly in some of the traditional sectors. Generally speaking, issues related to benefits lost can differ, and have differing levels of significance, according to framework.

In terms of what can be gained despite non-completion, there are cases where it can suit an employer better to have an employee who is working at a level lower than the work required for SVQ Level 3. The MA programme can also provide opportunities for the recruitment of young people, even if it does not result in non-completion. The young person may benefit by taking what they have learned to another job. They may be able to get to the same place with or without the MA. They may also benefit by earning better wages, at least in the short term.

SECTION EIGHT   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research which has been undertaken for this project has shown that while the MA programme has grown rapidly in Scotland, a significant proportion (52%) leave without completing their MA, and there are considerable variations between frameworks in terms of completion rates. This project has explored the reasons for non-completion, and identified measures which might be taken to improve completion rates. In this concluding section the main findings are summarised, and recommendations for change are outlined.

In March 2003 there were over 25,000 (see pg 2) modern apprentices in training in Scotland. In the Scottish Enterprise Network there had been a significant growth in starts between 2000-01 and 2001-02 followed by a consolidation in numbers, while in Highlands and Islands Enterprise the period of significant growth had been between 2001-02 and 2002-03. Completion rates in the Scottish Enterprise Network over this period remained relatively stable despite the large increase in starts. In 2002-03, 48% of all leavers were completers. In the six frameworks that were the focus of this study, a great deal of variability was found both in relation to completion rates and the time that the MA took to complete.

Although there are limited data available from the existing MA management information system on the achievements and destinations of non-completers, data on milestones and leaving codes provided some information. In the whole of the Scottish Enterprise Network, approximately half of all non-completers achieved at least one milestone, and 12.8% achieved at least half of the milestones on the plan. Leaving code analysis showed that 46.2% of leavers over a given time period left either having completed their MA or to continue some form of training. A further 22.3% were recorded as having found or remained in full-time employment. The reason for leaving was given as 'unemployed' or 'dismissed' for less than 10% of the leavers. The data from interviews with non-completers showed that 24 of the 35 were employed at the time of interview and 10 were unemployed. Although there were cases of employed non-completers being unhappy with what they were doing and who felt that they had missed out on the opportunity for a career, the two sources of evidence (leaving codes and interviews) taken together suggest that leaving a MA in the majority of cases is not associated with unemployment. A note of caution in interpreting findings is however necessary, as a the substantial number of leavers (20.6%) are registered in the 'other' category. Evidence from this study would suggest that the 'other' category is being used to record a wide range of outcomes. For example in one Local Enterprise Company this is used to record young people who have completed their MA, but are awaiting certification. In another Local Enterprise Company a more detailed study of leavers recorded in the 'other' category showed a number of what could be seen as positive outcomes. However, overall the current information available on what happens to non-completers is insufficient, and better systems for recording outcomes are required.

The factors associated with non-completion and completion are complex. A supportive workplace context emerged as a key factor in completion from all of the interview datasets. This included interested and committed employers, time being made available, a culture in which training is valued, and peer support. Wider sectoral issues, such as the stability of employment and the level of wages, were also important issues in many cases. The quality of the training is crucial to whether or not apprentices complete. The responsibility of ensuring good quality training falls on both the employer, who should ensure that opportunities to undertake the required type and level of work are available, and the training provider.

Although many good examples of practice by training providers emerged in the research, which had been vital in the apprentice completing the MA, a significant issue relates to the many cases where no training, just the assessment of competencies, is taking place. The appropriateness of an apprenticeship model that has been imported from the 'traditional' sector into new areas also emerged as an issue, particularly in relation to the type of training and how it is delivered. The existing quality assurance procedures did not appear to be adequately monitoring the training and assessment processes. Other key factors associated with completion and non-completion include recruitment, induction, and the extent to which involvement in the MA is an informed choice on the part of both apprentices and employers. Factors in the personal life of the apprentice were rarely the primary reason for non-completion, but could interact with other factors.

Benefits that can be lost to employers and apprentices depend to some extent on the way that the MA is perceived within the sector. Within the hospitality sector, the MA programme was seen by some to make the recruitment of young people possible, but employers accepted that the insecure nature of the employment meant that many apprentices would move on before the apprenticeship was complete. In the retail sector, the MA was not seen as necessary, or often even relevant, to doing the current job well or progressing. In the construction and motor vehicles sectors, non-completion could have a much more serious impact on career progression. Completion was, overall, found to be beneficial to the young people who were interviewed, although just over a quarter of interviewed completers believed they could have achieved their current position without the MA. Several others commented that they felt having the MA might help when looking for promotion or a new job in the future. It was suggested that improved tracking should be introduced. Part-certification for non-completers who had completed some part of the SVQ did not appear to be widespread, but could assist in increasing the transferability of what was achieved during the MA experience.

8.1 IMPROVING COMPLETION RATES THROUGH ENHANCING THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

The data presented in this report have shown that while there is considerable evidence that many young people receive high quality training through the MA programme, in other cases the arrangements in place are unsatisfactory and the quality of training which young people receive is poor. This is a major factor in contributing to poor completion rates.

This points to the need to introduce a number of changes designed to enhance the programme, and ensure that all young people involved receive high quality training. Improvements of this kind should improve completion rates and provide a more highly trained workforce.

It must be recognised that, given the range of occupational sectors involved and the different traditions of training, there may be major differences between MA programmes in the different sectors. Any changes introduced should recognise the needs of the different sectors.

The issues which should be addressed, and which are often inter-linked, are outlined below, and a series of recommendations then follows.

8.1.1　The role of employers

The MA programme is designed to be a work based system of training. Evidence from all of our respondents leads to the conclusion that if employers are supportive this makes an enormous contribution to a successful MA, while if employers are not supportive it becomes very difficult for young people to successfully complete their apprenticeship (Section 5.1). However the evidence also points to major differences between employers in the extent to which they understand the MA programme, are convinced of its value, and have appropriate structures in place to support it. There are also major differences here between large employers, some of whom have their own well established training infrastructures, and in some cases in-house programmes outside of the MA programme, and smaller companies, many of whom have few resources to support training.

This shows the need for more work to be done with employers which will result in fuller involvement in the programme. Measures are required to ensure that the MA programme meets employers' needs, that employers understand the value of MAs, and that they are engaged with the programme in ways which are fully supportive of the apprentices.

This points to the need for a more pro-active role on the part of staff in the Enterprise Network in working with employers. At present it would appear that a substantial amount of time for Enterprise Network staff is spent in the contract management aspect of the programme. While this is very important, there is also a need for more development work with employers to help ensure that they are more actively engaged with the programme. This is also a key responsibility for the SSBs, and SSBs should be expected to show what infrastructures they have in place, or are developing, to undertake this work. SSBs and the Enterprise Network should also be requested to indicate how they are working together to ensure that employers are fully involved in the programme. **(Recommendation 8.2.1)**

It must of course be recognised that for most employers, training is not their main role, and they may need support if training is to be carried out effectively. This leads to a consideration of the role of training providers.

8.1.2　The role of training providers and co-operation between training providers and employers

While the MA programme is a work based programme, training providers (or suppliers) have been given a key role in working with employers to implement the system. This partly reflects the perceived need for intermediary agencies to work with employers in helping them establish an effective training infrastructure.

However evidence from our respondents indicates that, while in some cases these training providers work closely with employers and young people to identify training needs, and ensure that appropriate support is provided, in other cases they are merely acting as assessors rather than as trainers. This reflects the emphasis on assessment of the occupational competences within the VQ system. This has resulted in a situation where in many cases the level of support being provided for both apprentices and employers is limited and the young people involved are not receiving appropriate and adequate training (Section 5.2).

There is a need for training providers to work more closely with employers to plan and implement training programmes. If this issue is addressed more effectively it could have a major impact in improving the quality of training for many young people and reducing non-completion rates.

This will require that expectations for training providers in identifying training needs, and in supporting employers and young people, should be clearly specified in the MA frameworks and by the Enterprise Network when they are awarding contracts to training providers **(Recommendation 8.2.2).** There will also be a need to monitor the work of training providers more closely through the quality assurance and contracts management systems. **(Recommendation 8.2.6)**

8.1.3   Recruitment and induction

Many respondents pointed to problems associated with recruitment and induction into the MA programme (Section 5.3). Often recruitment seems to be overly dependent on the role of training providers, and in many cases the involvement of employers is limited. It was pointed out that many training providers, as commercial organisations, have financial incentives in recruiting young people. As result it has been suggested that in a number of cases young people are recruited to MA programmes without really understanding what they are taking on, and there are instances where this is not the most appropriate programme for them. Similarly, employers may not be fully aware of the commitments which they are taking on when they allow their young employees to be recruited on to the MA programme, and cases were quoted where employers were not even aware that their employees had been recruited on to the MA programme by a training provider. These problems are exacerbated when there is an absence of a good induction programme, and there was evidence that in many cases the young people involved in MA programmes are unclear about the responsibilities and entitlements which they have as a result of being involved in this programme. However in a number of cases it was suggested that well structured induction programmes could have a valuable role in addressing these problems, and in leading to much higher retention rates. All of these problems can result in premature withdrawals from the programme because of lack of commitment on the part of the young people and employers.

An important priority should be to establish clear requirements regarding the processes for recruitment and induction to each MA programme which will involve both employers and training providers. **(Recommendation 8.2.3 & 8.2.5).** The implementation of these arrangements should be monitored through the quality assurance and contracts management systems. **(Recommendation 8.2.6)**

8.1.4   The provision of training within MAs

The MA programme is designed to be a training programme. However there was evidence of widespread differences in the nature and extent of training provided both between frameworks, and within frameworks. In some sectors, particularly more traditional apprenticeship models such as construction or motor vehicles, there are well established systems of off the job training involving colleges or training centres. In many of these cases respondents, including the young people, reported favourably about the contribution which this off the job training made to their experience. However in other sectors, for example retail

and business administration, it was reported that there was no tradition of off-the-job training which involves attending a college or training centre, and indeed its usefulness and appropriateness was questioned. In these cases, it was suggested that young people learned more effectively on the job, that many would not welcome the experience of being sent back to a more formal educational environment of a college, and that employers would be resistant to giving time off for this purpose. In some of these cases it was suggested that off-the-job training could be done more effectively in-house through mentoring, CD roms, training manuals and other supporting material (see Section 5.5.1).

This raises important questions about what is meant by the concept of a modern apprenticeship, and what type of training is to be expected. While recognising differences between sectors, there is a need to consider how acceptable standards of consistency can be established. There is a need to establish clearly the type of training to be provided within each framework. In the first instance this is the responsibility of the SSBs. However, to assist the SSBs with their task, MAIG should provide guidelines regarding the nature and extent of training expected within an MA. MAIG should also have a clearly specified role in scrutinising and approving the proposals regarding the type of training required within a framework, and the ways in which this training will be provided. **(Recommendation 8.2.4)**

8.1.5   Improvements in Frameworks

The framework documents for each MA have a key role in structuring the programme. However there is evidence that these could be improved in various ways, and these changes could contribute to an enhanced programme and lower non-completion rates. It has been suggested above that the frameworks might specify more clearly what is required regarding recruitment, induction and training for each MA.

Respondents have also reported a number of other problems with the frameworks. In some cases this is because the level of work required is unsuitable when the work which trainees actually do is taken into account. This has raised issues about the appropriateness of VQ levels. Issues have been raised about the appropriateness of MA frameworks in relation to the needs of employers in some sectors, and this has led to some radical re-thinking of frameworks, eg the framework for retail distribution (Section 5.5.2).

There is a need to consider if there are appropriate progression routes within the frameworks (eg from level 2 to level 3), and if there are progression routes to other qualifications (eg HNC/D or degrees where appropriate).

SSBs should therefore be requested to review the frameworks for which they are responsible in the light of these issues, and MAIG should take account of these issues when scrutinising and approving frameworks. **(Recommendation 8.2.5)**

8.1.6   Enhanced system of quality assurance and contract management

The quality assurance and contracts management systems have been recognised as having key roles in ensuring that the quality of the training provided is acceptable. However it has been suggested by respondents that the existing Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS) has focused on a rather narrow definition of an audit system, too much task and

process driven, with insufficient emphasis on the quality of what is being delivered by training providers. It has been suggested that an enhanced quality system could have a valuable role in ensuring that changes identified above were being implemented (Section 5.4).

A review of SQMS is already underway within the Enterprise Network, and will result in changes in the coming months. It is understood that this will result in a system where there is a much stronger emphasis on a developmental approach in which training providers, with support from Enterprise Network staff, will be given increased responsibility for the development and improvement of their activities. These developments are welcomed, and the Enterprise Network should be given every support in ensuring that a more rigorous, but supportive, QA system is put in place and is fully implemented.

One of the SSBs indicated that they are introducing a system of kitemarking of training providers to help employers identify organisations which will provide a service of appropriate quality. While developments of this kind are useful, it is important that there should be liaison between any SSBs involved in this type of work and the Enterprise Network to ensure that any systems established are complementary to each other.

A related issue is the one of contracts management and the targets which the Enterprise Network can specify for training providers when agreeing contracts with them. It is understood that there is also a review of these issues underway within the Enterprise Network, and this will contribute to improvements in the quality of what is provided. The Enterprise Network should be supported in developing and implementing contract management systems which will ensure a greater emphasis on training and outputs within the MA programme. **(Recommendation 8.2.6)**

8.1.7   Data collection and monitoring

The research has shown that the existing databases do not provide full and adequate data on the progression of young people enrolled on MA programmes (Section 6). In particular the data on young people who leave their MA programme before completion is limited. There is evidence that some apprentices who change employers and/or training provider are recorded as non completers, even though they are still on the MA programme. This can also apply to young people who change to another MA programme. At present training providers are the main source of data for these returns, and it is clear that there is inconsistency in how the leaving codes, which are used to record the reason for leaving for leavers from the MA programme, are applied. One particular problem is that despite the existence of 13 codes to record the destination of leavers, 20.6% in the Scottish Enterprise Network were recorded in the 'other' category for the period October 2001- March 2003. It is understood that a review of leaving codes is currently underway, and it is recommended that the Enterprise Network should be requested to consider how the routine data gathering can be improved to provide fuller and more accurate data, and to consider the most effective and accurate ways of gathering these data. **(Recommendation 8.2.7)**

8.1.8 The role of Careers Scotland

A number of respondents pointed to the need to ensure that better quality information was available about the MA programme, and the benefits associated with it. This would ensure that young people and their families were more aware of what the programme could offer them. This could improve recruitment to the programme, and help ensure that young people did not withdraw because their initial information was inadequate.

A number of respondents reported that links between Careers Scotland and the Local Enterprise Companies are still at a developmental stage in a number of areas (Section 5.7.1). There is a need for Careers Scotland staff to work closely with the Local Enterprise Companies to ensure that they are fully informed regarding MA opportunities in their area, and to consider how they can carry out most effectively their role with young people, families and schools.

Careers Scotland should also be encouraged to work with training providers in assisting young people who wish to move out of a MA programme to move on to a suitable alternative. **(Recommendation 8.2.8)**

8.1.9 A review of targets for the MA programme

While this research was not asked to undertake a review of targets within the MA programme, this is an issue which has been raised by a number of respondents. It has been argued by a range of stakeholders that the current policy focuses too strongly on the issue of targets which specify starts on the programme, and not enough on the quality of training which young people receive and the outputs from the programme (Section 5.7.2). It has been suggested in the issues discussed in this report that there is a need to focus more on the training system, and a need for quality assurance and contract management systems which will underpin this. It has been suggested that through improving the quality of the training experience which young people receive, higher retention rates will be achieved. This should lead to better trained young people contributing to the Scottish economy.

It is therefore suggested that the Scottish Executive should review the targets set for MAs. In undertaking this review they may wish to consider a greater emphasis on the quality of training, and the outputs from training, rather than starts. **(Recommendation 8.2.9)**

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.2.1 Role of Employers

Given the evidence that employers have a key role in ensuring successful completion of apprenticeships, an important priority must be to involve employers more fully in the programme. Measures must be taken to ensure that they understand its value, that it meets their needs, and to help ensure that they have more effective training infrastructures in place. To achieve this the following steps should be taken:

- The Enterprise Network should be requested to take on a more active and developmental role in working with employers to engage them more fully in the MA programme.

- The SSBs should be requested to indicate what structures they have in place, or are developing, in Scotland to work with employers to engage them with the MA programme.
- The Enterprise Network and the SSBs should be requested to show how they are working together to engage employers more effectively in the programme.

8.2.2 Role of Training Providers

Given the evidence that training providers should have a key role in working with employers and apprentices in implementing a training programme, but that their role in training is often limited, and that they have placed too much emphasis on assessment, this training role should be clearly specified and monitored in the following ways:

- The type of training required for each MA should be specified in the framework.
- The Enterprise Network should provide a protocol or guidelines which specify clearly what is expected of training providers with respect to training as well as assessment.
- The implementation of these guidelines should be monitored through the quality assurance and contracts management systems.

8.2.3 Recruitment and Induction

Steps are required to ensure that young people are only recruited onto the MA programme when this is appropriate for them and their employer, and that both the young person and their employers are fully aware of the opportunities and responsibilities involved.

- The requirements regarding recruitment and induction should be clearly specified in the framework document for each MA.
- Training providers and employers should be expected to work closely together in the processes of recruitment and induction and these processes should be monitored by the Enterprise Network through the quality assurance and contract management systems.

8.2.4 The Nature and Extent of Training within MAs

- The SSBs should be required to consult with employers and training providers about the nature and extent of training required within each MA, and how this should be provided. This should be reported within the MA framework document.
- MAIG should provide guidelines regarding the nature and extent of training to be provided within MAs to assist SSBs with this work.
- MAIG should scrutinise and approve the proposals regarding the provision of training in its approval of framework documents.

8.2.5 Improvements in Frameworks

- SSBs should be requested to undertake, in co-operation with employers, reviews designed to specify more clearly the framework requirements regarding: recruitment and induction; and training. They should also be requested to identify and address problems in

Frameworks with respect to: the work which trainees undertake, and for which they are being trained; the appropriateness of progression routes within the frameworks (eg from level 2 to level 3); and progression routes to other qualifications (eg HNC/D or degrees where appropriate).

- MAIG should be requested to consider these issues when scrutinising and approving framework proposals.

8.2.6   Quality Assurance and Contract Management

An enhanced quality assurance and contract management system should be put in place to ensure that training providers are only funded for MA programmes if they are providing effective training and support for apprentices and employers.

Towards this end the review of the quality assurance and contracts management systems which the Enterprise Network is undertaking is welcomed, and a QA system should be established which will include monitoring of the following issues:

- The nature of the relationship between training providers and employers
- Arrangements for recruitment and induction
- Arrangements for on-going support for training of apprentices
- Assessment arrangements
- Training providers' development plans
- Qualifications and training of training providers' staff
- The contracts management system established by the Enterprise Network should be one which focuses on the quality of training and outputs from the MA programme.
- SSBs which develop their own kitemarking systems for training providers should be requested to liaise with the Enterprise Network to ensure that their schemes are complementary.

8.2.7   Data Collection and Monitoring

- The Enterprise Network should be requested to establish more effective arrangements and guidelines for data gathering to ensure that the data on progression through MAs are as full as possible.
- The leaving codes, and the guidelines, for returning data should be reviewed by the Enterprise Network to ensure that the data give a fuller and more accurate account of the outcomes for leavers, and in particular that the 'other' category is a residual one, rather than accounting for 20% of all leavers.
- Mechanisms for the tracking of young people who change training providers or move to another MA programme should be established.

8.2.8   The Role of Careers Scotland

- Careers Scotland staff should develop their links with staff within the Local Enterprise Companies to ensure that they are fully informed regarding MA opportunities in their area, and to consider how can they can most effectively help inform young people, families and schools of the opportunities associated with MAs.

- Careers Scotland should also be encouraged to work with training providers in assisting young people who wish to move out of a MA programme to move on to a suitable alternative.

8.2.9 A Review of Targets for the MA Programme

- In order to achieve higher completion rates, the Scottish Executive should review the targets set to underpin a high quality work based Modern Apprenticeship training system, and place greater emphasis on quality of training and outputs from the programme rather than on starts.

- Further investigations involving key stakeholders (employers, the Enterprise Network, training providers, and SSBs) should be undertaken to establish an adequate evidence base in setting these targets.

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