

Degree apprenticeships in Wales

5 March 2018

1. Introduction

- 1.1 HEFCW has received confirmation from the Cabinet Secretary that it will receive support from Welsh Government to fund degree apprenticeships in Wales (see letter from Cabinet Secretary at Annex A). The letter sets out the Cabinet Secretary's expectations for HEFCW and estimated funding for the initial 3 years of delivery. This paper sets out initial guidance to support HEFCW's allocation of that funding. We will publish further guidance as information becomes available.
- 1.2 HEFCW-funded providers had previously submitted plans to HEFCW to develop qualifications which could form part of an apprenticeship in the following areas ICT/computing, engineering and advanced manufacturing. Funding was allocated on the basis of those plans.

2. Degree apprenticeships in Wales

- 2.1 Degree apprenticeships are work based learning programmes that provide opportunities for individuals working in Wales to develop relevant industry knowledge and job competencies whilst in paid employment, gaining the experience of doing a particular job(s).
- 2.2 The requirements for completing a degree apprenticeship will be set out in apprenticeship frameworks, commissioned by Welsh Government, and will include a level 6 degree qualification which is recognised by employers across an industry or range of industries.
- 2.3 Degree apprenticeship providers will be required to ensure that all the requirements of the relevant apprenticeship framework are met.
- 2.4 Providers will be encouraged to offer delivery through other providers where it best meets the needs of the employer and the apprentice. Flexible delivery methods are welcome and will not be limited to just the lead degree apprenticeship provider.
- 2.5 Whilst the funding mechanism for degree apprenticeships will differ from other apprenticeships in Wales, they will form part of the Welsh apprenticeship system.

3. Priority areas

- 3.1 Degree apprenticeships will be delivered in areas of the Welsh economy where there are identified skills needs. Initially degree apprenticeships will be funded in those areas where there are currently degree apprenticeship frameworks being developed: IT/digital; and advanced manufacturing and engineering.

4. Funding

- 4.1 Funding for degree apprenticeships from 2018/19 to 2020/21 will be approximately £20m. Funding will be allocated to degree apprenticeship providers via HEFCW. Funding will be available up to £27k per apprenticeship.

5. Employers

- 5.1 There are no restrictions to the type and/or size of employer that can recruit an apprentice, provided that the apprenticeship is within one of the priority areas identified by Welsh Government. However, the employer and HE provider must be clear that the individual apprentice will have the opportunity, in the workplace, to meet the competency requirements of the apprenticeship framework. Providers will need to be clear and transparent with the employer and the learner about the commitments they are signing up to including commitment to release the employee for any off the job training.

6. Duration

- 6.1 A full degree apprenticeship will be a minimum of 3 years in duration. However, they may need to be longer to ensure that the apprentice has sufficient time to meet the apprenticeship framework requirements whilst working.

7. Prior learning

- 7.1 Where relevant, we would expect providers to recognise prior learning, particularly where individuals have undertaken apprenticeships at lower levels. Providers will have the opportunity to deliver level 6 top ups which would be shorter in duration than full degree apprenticeships.

8. Requirements

- 8.1 Full details of the processes for making a proposal for HEFCW funding for a degree apprenticeship in the priority subject areas will be set out in due course. Listed below are some requirements which providers will need to consider:
- Collaborate with other apprenticeship providers to meet employer needs at all apprenticeship levels and create clear apprenticeship progression pathways from lower level apprenticeships;
 - All apprentices must be employed and their salaries will be met by the employer;
 - Apprentices must spend 51% or more of their time working in Wales;
 - There must be an apprenticeship agreement in place;
 - Degree apprenticeship providers must ensure that apprentices receive the on and off the job learning;
 - Apprentices should have their progress reviewed at least every 2 months;

- Apprentices should have access to the full range of student services offered by the provider;
- Providers should submit data as required by HEFCW;
- Degree apprenticeship marketing and communications should align with Welsh Government marketing and communications.

8.2 Additionally, we will encourage HEFCW funded institutions to participate in the following:

- Welsh Government apprenticeship marketing activities and national campaigns;
- Skills competitions such as World Skills.

9. Submitting proposals for funding

9.1 HEFCW-funded institutions will be invited to bid for degree apprenticeship funding, once the relevant frameworks are in place. Proposals will need to be set out in the context of set criteria (in such areas as collaboration, equality and diversity, and strategic fit), confirming

- employer sign up (names of employers and approximate number of employees to be enrolled on the degree apprenticeship);
- approximate overall numbers for 2018/19 and 2019/20;
- how providers are collaborating;
- that they will meet the requirements for a degree apprenticeship provider;
- and, where the degree apprenticeship provider is not a degree awarding body, sign up from the awarding institution and the delivery partners.

10. Expressions of interest

10.1 Institutions are invited to submit initial expressions of interests for 2018/19 and 2019/20 setting out the following information, completing the relevant form at Annex B:

- Name of apprenticeships interested in delivering including confirmation of the title of qualification that the institution intends to deliver;
- Name of delivery partner(s);
- Estimated numbers of apprentices on each apprenticeship;
- Estimated date(s) of commencement;
- Duration of the apprenticeship;
- Identified progression pathways into the apprenticeship;
- Names of employers interested in recruiting apprentices.

10.2 These expressions of interest forms do not commit institutions but give an indication to HEFCW of future demand. They should be submitted to Steve Williams (steven.williams@hefcw.ac.uk) as soon as possible but not later than Friday 23 March.

10.3 Within the expressions of interest, HEFCW-funded institutions are also invited to nominate communications and marketing contacts to meet with HEFCW and Welsh Government to discuss Welsh Government's apprenticeship marketing and communications activities.