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for Degree
Apprenticeships

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*Access and Participation Plans –
Aligning Approaches to Skills,
Technical Education, Apprenticeship
and Adult Skills Provision that
Maximise Impact and the Delivery of
Measurable Access and Participation
Plan Outcomes*

A UVAC Proposal

1. Summary

AIM: Aligning OfS Access and Participation Plans (APP) with the developing skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills agenda to maximise the recruitment and retention of underrepresented cohorts to and through higher education and into graduate jobs and the professions.	
KEY QUESTIONS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How should HE providers maximise opportunities for underrepresented groups to access and benefit from HE through Technical Education, Apprenticeship and Adult Skills provision? 2. How should the OfS expect to see Access and Participation Plans be developed, delivered and outcomes proposed and measured in a post Covid 19 economy to reflect key changes in skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and Adult Skills provision? 	
MAIN ISSUES: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The level 3 qualifications landscape is undergoing significant change with the introduction of T levels and the potential withdrawal of funding for Applied Generals and Tech levels. 2. Higher and Degree Apprenticeship starts on specific standards are growing rapidly. 3. The development of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) signals an increased emphasis on level 4 and 5 technical programmes delivered by both higher and further education providers. HTQs are expected to play a key role in supporting underrepresented and disadvantaged cohorts access higher technical/higher education. 4. Government is pushing for Higher Education to offer more ‘bite-sized’ provision, to make greater use of credit and focus on adult skills and on programmes developing the skills needed for the jobs of today, the future and not yesterday. 5. Through the planned Post 16/FE White Paper, Government is signifying its plans to develop a world-class technical education system; HE providers must demonstrate their key role in the development, delivery and accreditation of technical education working with FE and how this can support access and participation. 	
KEY TO SUCCESS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement and compliance by HE providers with systems developed by ESFA, IfATE and Ofsted, including, funding requirements, audit, approvals processes and inspection. 2. How HE providers use Apprenticeships and technical education provision to ‘train and retain’ local talent as part of the ‘levelling-up’ agenda. 3. Developing partnerships with employers and further education providers to support access and participation to and through HE for underrepresented cohorts. 	
PROPOSAL: A one-year, two-part support programme to complement existing activities including the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)/UniConnect	
PART ONE – Advice and guidance for the OfS on:	OUTCOMES – Advice and guidance on:
- Coverage and Aspiration	- What coverage of, and measurable outputs should the OfS expect to see in an Access and Participation Plan on approaches to skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision to recruit and engage more underrepresented cohorts of learners?
- Data and Measures	- What base lines and data on impact should the OfS expect HE providers to collect and measure to demonstrate successful approaches to and use of technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision in recruiting and delivering programmes for underrepresented learners?
- Defining ‘Good’	- What does good look like and what potential measures of impact and case studies can be identified and disseminated by OfS to HE providers?

- Action and Activities that Deliver Measurable Results	- What HE provider action and activities would OfS expect to increase the use of skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision to recruit and engage more underrepresented cohorts of learners?
- Expectations of Partnership	- How would the OfS expect an HE provider working with employers, FE providers – colleges and independent provider – schools and PSRBs to increase the use of skills, technical education, apprenticeship and adult learning provision, to recruit and engage more underrepresented cohorts of learners?
- Levelling Up and Public Sector Service Delivery	- How would the OfS expect to see an HE provider use technical education provision and Higher and Degree Apprenticeship to support a locality to train AND retain individuals from underrepresented groups for the graduate jobs needed in a local economy?
PART TWO – Support for HE on:	OUTCOMES
- T levels, Applied Generals, Tech Levels	- Briefing events, guidance and webinars on implementing approaches to support underrepresented groups access and progress through HE and their use in Access and Participation Plans, working with IfATE, key awarding organisations and further education partners to deliver these activities
- Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)	- Briefing event, guidance and webinars on securing the quality mark, delivery and the development of HTQs to support underrepresented groups to access and progress through HE and their use in Access and Participation Plans, including a focus on how HEIs could deliver Ofqual regulated HTQs and partnership approaches with FE
- Higher and Degree Apprenticeships	- Briefing events, guidance and webinars on the development of approaches to supporting underrepresented groups to access and progress through HE and their use in Access and Participation Plans, working with IfATE and ESFA to deliver these activities
- CPD, Bite Sized, Credit and Adult Skills Programmes	- Briefing events, guidance and webinars on the development of approaches to supporting underrepresented groups to access and progress through HE and their use in Access and Participation Plans, working with IfATE and Awarding Organisations to deliver these activities
- Good Practice	- Guides, evaluation tools, data frameworks, case studies, and metrics, to capture, evidence and track how providers use their Access and Participation Plans to support underrepresented groups to access and progress through HE
COSTINGS	£70,000 to £85,000. Part One – advice and guidance for the OfS £45,000 - £55,000. Part Two – support for all HE providers £25,000 - £30,000.

2. Introduction and Rationale

This paper outlines a programme of work UVAC could undertake to support the OfS to ensure that Access and Participation Plans developed by HE providers were appropriately aligned with, implemented and delivered to reflect the developing skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills agenda.

A key question for the OfS and every HE provider is how Access and Participation Plans should be developed and delivered in a post Covid 19 economy and reflect key changes in skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision. In particular, how should HE providers maximise opportunities for underrepresented groups to access and benefit from HE through technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision? We would note:

- HE providers deliver technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision, that is key to realising the Government's skills agenda, for example, through nursing, policing, social work, digital and engineering programmes. Such provision can also be designed and delivered to enable people from underrepresented backgrounds to access higher education and technical and professional level jobs.
- This key HE provider role in skills provision, particularly in terms of measurable outcomes, is underrepresented in Access and Participation Plans. More generally, the HE provider role in skills is also often underplayed and insufficiently recognised.
- If work is undertaken to steer and align plans for delivering and developing skills provision through HE providers with access and participation this will result in a productive alignment between two key Government policy areas. These policy areas are, firstly increasing access and participation in HE from underrepresented cohorts and secondly developing the higher-level skills provision that the economy and society needs through technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills programmes.

The programme of work outlined focuses on defining how skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision could be developed and delivered to maximise the recruitment and retention of underrepresented cohorts to and through higher education and into graduate jobs and the professions. The proposal focuses on how success could be defined, activities undertaken, and targets determined and measured.

3. The Issue – Access and Participation Plans Reflect Current level 3 Programmes and Qualifications and Existing Higher Education Programmes

The level 3 qualifications landscape is about to undergo significant change with the push to introduce T levels and the potential withdrawal of funding for Applied Generals (e.g. BTEC Nationals and Cambridge Nationals) and Tech levels. Approximately 200,000 students took Applied Generals or Tech Level qualifications in 2018 and around 20% of 18-year olds applying to university held at least one Applied General/Tech Levels. UVAC has worked extensively with Awarding Organisations and HE providers, from all mission groups, who have focused specific outreach activities on supporting individuals following Applied Generals and Tech Levels progress to Higher Education. Many HE providers see the Applied General as a key way of widening participation. Such widening participation activities will, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the future of Applied Generals, need to be revised, refocused and adapted for T levels. There is a significant risk to HE access and participation if HE providers do not reflect and adapt to changes to the level 3 qualification landscape in their approaches to access and participation. HE providers need to be supported to prepare for such changes.

Elsewhere, Higher and Degree Apprenticeship starts on specific standards are growing rapidly, or are predicted to grow rapidly, particularly their use by adults and in several key occupational areas, nursing, policing and the digital sector being good examples. The development of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) signals an increased emphasis on level 4 and 5 technical programmes which could be delivered by both higher and further education providers. HTQs will encompass qualifications regulated by Ofqual and qualifications offered and awarded by the OfS regulated institutions. HTQs offered by Ofqual regulated Awarding Organisations and HEI qualifications with the HTQ quality mark (awarded by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education) will be expected to play a key role in supporting underrepresented and disadvantaged cohorts to access higher technical/higher education.

Positively, there is an opportunity for the HE sector to demonstrate more clearly how the ‘skills’ provision it delivers increases access and participation opportunities. Much outreach work described in Access and Participation Plans is still focussed on a deficit model of raising aspirations and awareness regarding HE opportunities. Increased access and participation outcomes are, however, sometimes more likely to be delivered if clear progression pathways to professional status are promoted and provided. The recent Health Education England Digital Readiness Programme procurement is a good example of such an approach. The programme seeks to establish long term and sustainable approaches to recruiting people from underrepresented groups into digital roles. The programme is also designed to provide opportunities for such individuals to progress their career through Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships into professional level roles. The programme supports FE and HE partnerships that will provide a model that can be rolled out nationally. It is precisely this kind of activity that aligns access and participation with the skills agenda and crucially it requires FE, HE and employers to collaborate to deliver the desired outcomes.

Government is also pushing for Higher Education to offer more ‘bite-sized’ provision, to make greater use of credit and focus on adult skills and on programmes developing the skills needed for the jobs of today and not yesterday. The Treasury is focused on the role of skills provision in raising productivity and the return on investment delivered by education and skills provision. The Covid 19 pandemic is undoubtedly having a harsher impact on some groups. While it may be too early to draw definitive conclusions, certain occupations and sectors are more adversely affected than others, as are some localities. Individuals in occupations with lower skill levels and those under 30 are particularly adversely affected. Employers and Government will expect HEIs to have a fundamental role, often in partnership with FE providers, in delivering the skills those entering and those already in the workforce need in a post Covid 19 economy. HE providers need to ensure approaches to skills provision focus on the needs of the national and local economies post Covid 19, engage learners from all backgrounds and particularly underrepresented cohorts, disadvantaged learners and groups most adversely impacted by the pandemic. The key approach here is ‘flexibility’. This does not just mean bite sized provision, but also more transparent opportunities for learners to access HE with recognition of their prior learning, building on the required practice of RPL through initial assessment for all Apprenticeships (including Higher and Degree Apprenticeships). And more effective use of Cert HE and Dip HE exit awards in skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision. The forthcoming post 16 White Paper is anticipated to outline such a direction of travel and align with a strategy for higher education.

A key question for the OfS and every HE provider is how Access and Participation Plans should be developed and delivered in a post Covid 19 economy and reflect key changes in skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and Adult Learning Provision.

New Programmes and the Growth of Existing Provision – HE providers will need to consider and develop approaches to recruit and deliver provision for those taking T levels. In particular, how will HE providers adapt or replace the approaches developed for Applied Generals and Tech Levels to reach underrepresented groups and disadvantaged learners choosing to pursue T levels, or follow A levels where in the past they would have opted for Applied Generals? What approach will HE providers adopt to Higher Technical Qualifications, both in terms of gaining the quality mark for their own programmes (including exit awards), delivering programmes awarded by others and supporting top-ups to bachelors’ programmes? How

will HE providers use the HTQ Quality Mark to open up opportunities to underrepresented cohorts of learners?

How will HEIs deliver Higher and Degree Apprenticeships for underrepresented cohorts and respond to the legitimate concerns raised by several organisations that some Apprenticeship standards are not delivering for underrepresented learners? Finally, what approaches can and should HE providers adopt to deliver smaller credit bearing programmes and CPD focused on adult skills for underrepresented cohorts of learners?

Several points are apparent:

- To improve access to Higher and Degree Apprenticeships and other programmes for underrepresented groups HE providers could seek to work with employers to inform the establishment of ‘fair’ (in Schwartz terms) admissions/recruitment processes
- The apprentice lifecycle is about flexibility and access opportunities need to be provided through apprenticeships and other ‘skills’ provision. HE providers need to collaborate with employers and learners to ensure that provision meets the needs of both employers and learners
- CPD programmes need to be offered so they can be accumulated through credit to open up opportunities for progression to and through HE.

The Role and Influence of Key Organisations – HE providers will need to engage with and follow systems developed by ESFA, IfATE and Ofsted, including, ESFA Funding Rules, audit, approvals processes and inspection. In “English Apprenticeships: 2020” Government outlined its commitment towards increasing the proportion of apprentices from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds by 20%, as well as ensuring that support is available for people with special educational needs and disabilities. Will comparisons be drawn between Higher Technical Qualifications awarded by Ofqual regulated awarding organisations and OfS regulated HEIs and participation and use by underrepresented cohorts of learners? Higher education providers also need to work with PSRBs to ensure skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult learning provision open up opportunities for professional accreditation and membership for underrepresented cohorts of learners, if they are to deliver the OfS access and participation aims. What approaches will the OfS expect HE providers to consider, how should they work with PSRBs and what data should be used to measure success? How will Government, LEPs and metro mayors expect HE providers to use Apprenticeships and technical education provision to ‘train and retain’ local talent as part of the Levelling Up Agenda?

Developing Partnerships with Employers and Further Education Providers – Partnerships with employers are fundamental to maximising the participation of underrepresented learners. HE providers need an excellent understanding of labour market needs and the skills employers want and individuals need to secure employment or progression and promotion in work. Some work-based programmes will be particularly attractive to underrepresented cohorts of learners; Apprenticeships, for example, which offer the opportunity for adults with family responsibilities to learn while they earn. The Treasury is looking at the return on investment offered by learning programmes and measures of increases in remuneration. Will measurements of learning programmes be focused on how the benefits of increases in remuneration are shared by individuals of all backgrounds? In an Apprenticeship an employer, not a provider recruits the learner. While this may mean the provider has less influence on recruitment than for a full-time degree programme the HE provider has opportunity to influence and support employer approaches to diversity and widening recruitment to disadvantaged and underrepresented cohorts of learners. Already, UVAC has identified positive developments in this area, particularly in the public sector with the police constable, registered nurse and social worker Degree Apprenticeships. Such approaches need to be considered and translated to other occupational areas and in approaches adopted by other HE providers.

Through the forthcoming Post 16/FE White Paper, the Government is signifying its plans to develop a world-class technical education system. HE providers will also have a key role to play in the development, delivery

and accreditation of technical education. This will call for more and enhanced forms of partnership between further and higher education. An employer seeking to train and develop new and/or existing employees wants a skills solution rather than just an FE or HE programme. Individuals want the skills needed in the jobs market whether provided by an FE or HE provider. Individuals following skills programmes in FE need to have the right opportunities to progress to HE delivered by an HEI and/or an FEC. Approaches to skills, workforce development and CPD need to be combined with approaches to access and participation.

It is essential that new forms of partnership and the delivery of new forms of learning provision open up opportunities to underrepresented cohorts and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

4. A Programme of Support for the OfS and the HE Sector

UVAC propose undertaking a one-year two-part support programme – the first part for the OfS during the first six months of the programme and the second part for all higher education providers over a twelve-month period. All activities would be delivered to complement existing activities including the National Collaborative Outreach Programme/UniConnect.

Part One - Support for the OfS – UVAC would work with the HE sector and key stakeholders to advise on, in the context of current advice and guidance, and define ‘answers’ as follows:

- **Coverage and Aspiration** - What measurable outputs would the OfS expect to see in an Access and Participation Plan on approaches to skills, technical education, apprenticeship and adult skills provision to recruit and engage more underrepresented cohorts and disadvantaged learners?
- **Data and Measures** - What base lines and data on impact should OfS expect HE providers to establish, collect and measure to demonstrate successful approaches to and use of technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision in recruiting and delivering programmes for underrepresented learners? While Polar and IMD measures will be of value, other measures will also be needed to reflect the different characteristics of learners who will follow such programmes. Polar and IMD measures are, for example, particularly problematic in dense urban areas and especially in parts of London. First in family to HE or to a profession will be important measures. A better understanding and measures are also needed as to the relative proportion of learners who have followed lower level skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills programmes from underrepresented groups and their entry to and success in higher education. As Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are employer programmes, comparators between existing and new employment recruitment patterns need to be considered. To what extent has (or has not) a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship helped diversify recruitment to a particular occupation, particularly for underrepresented cohorts of learners?

Progression from programmes offered by independent training providers as well as further education colleges need to be reconsidered. Measures also need to be made as to the impact of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship on developing new work-based career progression routes. For example, supporting health care assistants to progress to become associate nurses and nurse associates become registered nurses. Are Higher and Degree Apprenticeships being used to develop new work based progression routes to the professions for individuals in occupational roles where opportunities for promotion may have been limited in the past?

- **Defining Good** - What does a ‘good’ and effective approach look like and what measures and case studies can be identified and used to disseminate good practice? Specifically, how can higher education providers adopt an approach to the recruitment of individuals who have followed Technical Education programmes and lower level Apprenticeships (levels 3 to 5) to widen access to underrepresented cohorts to higher education? How can HE provider approaches to Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, Higher Technical Qualifications and Adult Skills Provision widen access to

underrepresented cohorts of learners? What delivery approaches, measures and monitoring are needed and would OfS expect to see to support such learners to realise their potential?

- **Action and Activities that Deliver Measurable Results** - What HE provider action and activities would increase the use of skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision to recruit and engage more under-represented cohorts of learners?
- **Expectations of Partnership** - How should an HE provider work with employers, FE providers – colleges and independent providers, schools and PSRBs to increase the use of skills, technical education, apprenticeship and adult learning provision, to recruit and engage more underrepresented cohorts of learners?
- **Levelling Up and Public Sector Service Delivery** - How would the OfS expect to see an HE provider use technical education provision and Higher and Degree Apprenticeship to support a locality to train AND retain individuals from underrepresented groups for the graduate jobs needed in a local economy? How should such approaches link to metro mayor/LEP priorities, public sector recruitment and training priorities and engagement with employer bodies and SMEs?

In addition to the above, the OfS will need to keep a watching brief on the following and may wish to encourage HE provider engagement in the following areas:

- **Skills Ladder/Skills Escalator** – GCSEs lead to A levels and A levels lead to bachelors’ degrees. Vocational and work-based programmes have not tended to be as effective in supporting progression to higher education. OfS, IfATE and ESFA need to identify and overcome the barriers that are preventing the development and operation of a ‘skills ladder’/‘skills escalator’. Awareness levels and understanding among HE providers as to how to develop a ‘skills ladder’/‘skills escalator’ needs to be enhanced. HE providers will also increasingly need to design and deliver provision in a different way and work with schools and particularly FE providers to outline opportunities to progress to HE from level 3 vocational programmes. An analysis of how to develop a skills, technical education and work-based “skills ladder/skills escalator” is needed.
- **Development and Approvals Process for Apprenticeship Standards** – More HE engagement is needed in the development of Apprenticeship Standards at lower levels, particularly level 3, if Apprenticeship is to support more effective progression to Degree Apprenticeship and vocational higher education provision.
- **Development and Approvals Process for Higher Technical Qualifications** – It is important that both Ofqual regulated Awarding Organisations and the OfS regulated HE providers are able to successfully engage in the HTQ quality mark process. Currently HE providers are reporting some difficulty in the process for gaining approval for qualifications that align with qualifications in the digital route (the first route to open). It is crucial that HE providers are encouraged and enabled to seek HTQ status for appropriate qualifications.
- **Promotion of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Opportunities to Schools, Colleges and Independent Training Providers** – While much of the potential of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship to widen access and participation to higher education may be delivered through the recruitment of adult learners a considerable amount of work is needed to ensure that young people from underrepresented groups are recruited onto appropriate programmes. This will call for HE providers working with LEPs, PSRBs and employers to undertake appropriate outreach work with schools, colleges and independent training providers.

Part Two - Support for the HE Sector – HE providers will need to undertake considerable work to determine how they can widen access and participation through technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision and outline such action in their Access and Participation Plans. UVAC would provide support to all higher education providers and NCOP partnerships as follows:

- Briefing events, webinars and website briefings on T levels, the position of Applied Generals/Tech Levels and the development of approaches to supporting underrepresented groups to access and progress through HE and their use in Access and Participation Plans – UVAC would work with IfATE colleagues, key awarding organisations and further education partners to deliver these activities.
- Briefing events, webinars and website briefings on Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), securing the Quality Mark, delivery and the development of approaches to supporting underrepresented groups to access and progress through HE and their use in Access and Participation Plans – UVAC would work with IfATE colleagues and key awarding organisations to deliver these activities (the process of approval is organised on a route by route basis with the first approval process already started for qualifications that align with occupations in the digital route). We would include a particular focus on how HEIs could deliver Ofqual regulated HTQs and partnership approaches with further education.
- Briefing events, webinars and website briefings on Apprenticeship, Higher Apprenticeship and Degree Apprenticeship delivery and the development of approaches to supporting underrepresented groups to access and progress through HE and their use in Access and Participation Plans – UVAC would work with IfATE and ESFA colleagues to deliver these activities
- Briefing events, webinars and briefings on CPD, bite sized programmes, credit and adult skills and the development of approaches to supporting under-represented groups to access and progress through HE and their use in Access and Participation Plans – UVAC would work with IfATE colleagues and key awarding organisations to deliver these activities
- Identification and dissemination of good practice – UVAC would seek to identify and thereafter disseminate detailed case studies, performance measures and indicators that provide a variety of examples of how HE providers have widened and could widen access and participation through skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult learning provision.

5. Methodology

UVAC has extensive experience of supporting the HE sector (all types of HE provider) to respond to and embrace the development and delivery of new programmes. For two years UVAC was funded by HEFCE/the OfS to deliver a cross sector Degree Apprenticeship support programme. UVAC works closely with UUK, mission groups and key agencies, the IfATE and ESFA. To deliver the programme proposed we would develop and substantially extend our existing support programme focused on Apprenticeship and technical education and make it available to the entire HE sector. With the agreement of the OfS we would also commission research to determine base lines from which to measure access and participation to and through higher education for individuals from underrepresented cohorts following skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills programmes. UVAC would outline a detailed methodology if the OfS wished to explore taking forward work in this area.

6. *Outputs – Benefits to the OfS*

The work programme would focus on the delivery of the following outputs:

- Determination of base line data and measures by which to evaluate the impact of approaches to skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult learning provision on access and participation for underrepresented groups (in comparison with ‘conventional’ HE programmes). In addition to POLAR, IMD, socioeconomic status this would include:
 - a. First in family to HE/a profession
 - b. Progression from a lower level job role to a graduate occupation
 - c. Progression from level 3-5 technical, vocational programmes/qualifications
 - d. Measures of wage/salary increase for individuals moving from a level 3, 4 or 5 role to a level 6 role.

We would also focus on data and measures for learners who share the following characteristics; BAME, those with disability status and other under-represented groups.

- Summary template of what HE providers should consider including in Access and Participation Plans in respect of skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult learning provision
- Publication of a guide on how to include approaches to skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision in access and participation plans and HE provider activities
- Identification and publication of good practice case studies on how approaches to skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult skills provision can widen access and participation to higher education
- Production of tools, templates, data frameworks, guidance and support on using skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult learning provision to widen access and participation to under-represented cohorts.

7. *Costing*

On the basis of costing rates previously agreed with the OfS for earlier programmes of work we believe we could undertake an extensive twelve-month programme to deliver the objectives outlined and methodology proposed for a cost of £70,000 to £85,000. We would anticipate the costs of undertaking ‘part one’ support for the OfS would be in the order of £45,000 to £55,000 and ‘part two’ support for the HE sector would be in the order of £25,000 to £30,000. A full itemised costing would be provided if the OfS wished to discuss this proposal further.

8. *UVAC*

UVAC was founded in 1999 as a not-for-profit Higher Education organisation to champion higher-level vocational learning. Our remit is to support HE providers, working with employers and partners, to successfully engage in and deliver this agenda. UVAC currently has 77 HEI members drawn from England and Wales and from across all mission groups. UVAC membership is open to all HE providers and we are seeing a growth of interest in membership from employer providers. Our services have been used extensively across the higher education sector by both members and non-members.

UVAC works extensively with Ofqual regulated Awarding Organisations (Pearson, City and Guilds, OCR, NCFE), many of whom have joined UVAC as corporate supporters, as have several key professional bodies. This enables UVAC to discuss and share approaches to T levels, Higher Technical Qualifications and Apprenticeships with both HEIs and key Ofqual regulated awarding organisations.

UVAC has three categories of activity; advocacy, research and sector support. Our advocacy approach focuses on enabling HE providers, working in partnership as appropriate, to maximise the contribution they can make to skills, technical education, Apprenticeship and adult learning provision to raise UK productivity, enhance the delivery of public sector services and improve social mobility and workforce diversity.

UVAC's official peer reviewed journal Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning, published five times per annum by Emerald has featured a range of special editions on Higher and Degree Apprenticeship including: Degree Delivering Quality and Social Mobility, Equality and Diversity Matter and Transforming the Perception of Apprenticeships in England: Professional Careers in the Public Sector. Additionally, UVAC regularly produces reports on key topics linked to our agenda. Our two most recent reports Skills – A Post Covid 19 System and Realising the Potential of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship in Supporting Social Mobility and the Levelling Up Agenda have attracted considerable attention.

Through UVAC's Centre for Degree Apprenticeships (www.cda.uvac.ac.uk), launched with support from the Edge Foundation, we have provided extensive support for HEIs delivering Apprenticeships including templates, knowledge networks on specific key standards (nursing, policing and social worker) and key aspects of the ESFA/IfATE operational system, including compliance, audit, contracting, funding, end point assessment delivered via web support. Finally, working with our Awarding Organisation corporate supporters UVAC has provided and continues to provide support for our members to understand and respond to developments with level 3 qualifications, particularly T levels and the introduction of Higher Technical Qualifications.



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