

UVAC 'State of the Nation'

03/03/2023



Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Julie Stone – FISSS
3. Policy Update
4. UVAC Updates
5. Final Word

Julie Stone Federation For Industry Sector Skills And Standards

UVAC
UNIVERSITY VOCATIONAL AWARDS COUNCIL



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APPRENTICESHIPS

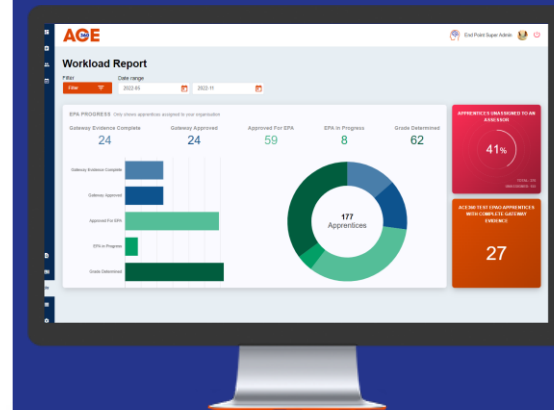


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UVAC State of the Nation Update

Julie Stone
Independent Consultant





FISSS Research – April 2022

- Federation of Industry Sector Skills & Standards commissioned PS EdTech to carry out market research with a group of universities currently providing or considering providing degree apprenticeships.
- Focus of the interview was to understand current operational challenges faced around delivery, on programme assessment, end-point assessment and submission of data returns for funding and certification.
- Interviewers sought to understand the institution's experience of quality assurance and adherence to regulatory requirements around apprenticeship delivery.
- Research findings shared with sector to raise awareness of current challenges and issues and inform service and quality improvement initiatives.

Key Findings



Steep learning Curve, Limited Support

There is no single place for support, quality, funding, governance, language



Fusion of FE & HE worlds

The desire for a more sophisticated approach to apprenticeship development and delivery within a framework that spans levels 2-7.

UVAC assuring a consistent HE voice



Leadership teams not fully briefed on apprenticeships

Difficult to secure strategy and investment in infrastructure (end-to-end systems)



Key Findings



Migration to Integrated Apprenticeships

Assessment independence compliance challenge due to EQA uncertainty and lack of guidance



Upholding of Standards

Lack of aggregated reporting both internal and external – no external sector benchmarking being undertaken



Policy Uncertainty Funding & Quality

Shifting landscape e.g., funding band reviews, continued Government support for Degree Apprenticeships



HE Enterprise System Challenges

Infrastructure based on 3-year full-time degree - do not easily accommodate apprenticeship offer. Need to meet internal and external quality data needs.

EPA process (critical to apprenticeship integrity)



Positive Findings



Enhanced Regional engagement with Employers, FE Colleges

Greater engagement – supporting regional skills needs ecosystem development to support sectors, enabling conversations



Universities planning further growth (managed)

Growth planned across all universities, opportunity to support employers and provide new routes into higher education, focus on strengths



Welcome the shift to integrated

Support full apprentice journey, provider and assessor in line with HE model (guidance a concern)



UVAC welcomed as a strong voice to understand and support universities

Provided support for universities and forum for discussion – policy lobbying appreciated to ensure a more sophisticated model



Apprenticeship route seen as critical to a more comprehensive offer within HE

Evidence of different profile of learners – positive impact for social mobility agenda



Update: A Year On

- Higher and degree Apprenticeship continued growth
- Continued shift towards integrated – IFATE Policy decision – now starting to materialise
- Government position is to continue to move in this direction – Robert Halfon– (Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and HE) – Gillian Keegan (Minister for Education)
- Government incentives – £8m strategic fund - is it enough?
- Change of Government?
- Skills agenda – direction of travel - policy
- Sector Stakeholders positively engaging – UUK, UCAS
- Social Mobility – not yet fully evidenced
- EQA Uncertainty/QAA Assessments
- Completion rates – improvement needed

Quality, Quality, Quality

Research informed sector position

- Concern over quality and compliance checks
- Challenges re organisational oversight – process mapping – data extraction
- Committed to apprenticeship standards – managing independent EPA process

Supporting HEI's

- **Independent EPA:** Manages potential conflict of interest with integrated degrees (having two accounts with separate log ins).
- **Assuring Standards:** ACE360 has all the standards from iFATE, they are kept up to date and broken down by the assessment plan, ensuring consistency across EPA providers.
- **Tracking and Intervention:** Have visibility of learners and what stage they are up to in their apprenticeship journey.
- **Central Point for EPA Compliance Data:** Aggregate and individual reporting and data export from the system. Auditable EPA data to evidence compliance in a central place.
- **Managing the Apprenticeship Journey:** Create an EPA booking and assign to an academic all within one system.
- **Managing Process:** Academics receive out of system notifications when EPA bookings have been assigned.

FISSS

- Research Informed approach – strong sector engagement
- Charity with employer led board (Sector Skills Councils and Bodies)
- Certificated more than 3 million Framework Apprentices in England, Wales and Scotland
- Develop systems to Assure Quality in Apprenticeships
- Assisting organisations in the delivery and assessment of Apprenticeships
- Providing sector solution for data gathering and reporting – assuring standards

Federation for
Industry Sector
Skills & Standards

POWERING

Apprenticeship Certificates
England

Apprenticeship Certification
Wales

Modern Apprenticeship
Online

ACE 360 Connect &
collaborate,
securely.

Quality Workshop – 26th April 2023

What would you like to see / talk about?

Feedback to: info@psedtech.com



Policy Update

Dr Mandy Crawford-Lee
Chief Executive, UVAC



Higher Level Skills – UVAC Reflections

- Westminster Government and Skills Policy
- Technical Education and Vocational Pathways
- Higher and Degree Apprenticeships
 - Review of the Apprenticeship Levy
 - EQA of EPA for integrated Higher & Degree Apprenticeships
- Lifelong Loan Entitlement
- Recognition of Prior Learning – National Progression Agreement
- Apprenticeship Workforce Development (AWD) Programme 2023

Westminster Government

- **What Now..?**
 - Secretaries of State for Education in 2022 – Nahim Zahawi; Michelle Donelan; James Cleverly; Kit Malthouse; NOW #5 **Gillian Keegan, MP**
 - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills, Further and Higher Education - NOW **Robert Halfon, MP**, self styled champion of technical education
 - Suggested that education could be the PM's big revolution with a focus on the workforce
 - 'Bye, bye' BEIS and 'hello' DESNZ, DSIT and DBT
- **What about the Opposition...Labour's Council of Skills Advisors' Report?**
 - 'Degree Apprenticeships will play a crucial part in facilitating cutting-edge industries' (p. 78)
 - 'We will need to place emphasis on progression and the acquisition of higher-level skills' (p. 62)
 - 'High quality further and higher education is fundamental both to individual opportunity and to the economy of the future' (p. 56)
 - The development of Individual Learning Accounts; Learning and Skills *Passport*; and a right to retrain
 - A new organisation **Skills England** – replacing the new Unit for Future Skills?"

Technical Education and Pathways

- Proposed Mainstream Offer at 16 - 18
- Some Opportunity for smaller Applied Generals to be combined with A Levels, but Applied Generals (e.g., BTEC and Cambridge Nationals) were threatened to become 'rare'...becoming **'Alternative Academic Qualifications'**
- A coalition of 30 organisations undertaking on-going lobbying on the value of the **Applied General** via The #ProtectStudentChoice campaign
- **T Levels** – first cohorts in *construction, digital, and education and childcare* received their results on **'A level and T Level results day'**
 - Communication and briefings from DfE
 - More than a third achieved top grades – digital most difficult
 - High number received university places – 71% of applicants

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

- Universities ordered to set “ambitious targets” to boost the proportion of students studying degree apprenticeships
- DfE introduced “financial incentive” to entice more universities to offer degree apprenticeships
- **Strategic Priorities Grant (SPG)** fund of £8m in **AY22/23** ‘allocated’ by formula funding – focussed on growth in start volumes and rewarding providers for performance above AY21/22 activity
- SPG **AY23/24** likely to be ‘targeted’ – via a competitive process aligned to Minister Halfon’s Priorities: SME growth; social justice; expanding an institution’s standards
 - Based on the previous Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund
 - Inviting projects on themes around 18–24-year-olds; disadvantage; movement into less established programmes; support new entrant to the market via incentives
 - Proposes a list of fundable activities: new provision; upskilling non/academic staff in delivery; growing pipeline of new vacancies including supporting progression

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

- Resurgence of the view of the 'middle-class land grab' and 'hogging' of *prized apprenticeships*
 - [The Times, 8 December 2022](#)
 - The Sutton Trust featured in [The Times, 7 December 2022](#)
- Sutton Trust Research – [The Recent Evolution of Apprenticeships – Apprenticeship pathways and participation since 2015](#)
 - *Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are not more common among disadvantaged individuals than a university degree. From this perspective, it is hard to see Higher and Degree Apprenticeships as a route to widen opportunities for individuals from poorer backgrounds. (p. 35)*
- **Our Response:** The report has some important messages regarding young people from more deprived backgrounds and the need for more to be done to support them to access Degree Apprenticeships...BUT the analysis and conclusions could, if acted upon undermine the contribution of higher and degree apprenticeship to social mobility

Review of the Apprenticeship Levy

- The Government's budget for Apprenticeships is set to rise to £2.7bn by FY 2024/25
- Criticism of the Levy grows
 - Two *Times* articles on [calls for a reform the levy funding system](#) and claims that ['apprenticeship funding was 'wasted'](#)
 - EDSK report "[Changing Courses](#)" favours a more radical overhaul warned as 'retrograde' by FSB including an 'Apprenticeships and Skills Levy'
 - Labour proposes turning the 'failed' Apprenticeship Levy into an 'Apprenticeship and Learning Levy'
- See our *FE News* article 'A review of the apprenticeship levy and how the tax system incentivises employers to invest in training' [HERE](#) and our *FE Week* article 'Let's prioritise skills spending on level 4 to level 7' [HERE](#)
- UVAC and CMI full policy/position paper published in November:
Our recommendations:
 1. **Clarity and Purpose**
 2. **Widen the scope of the system**
 3. **Introduce an apprenticeship opportunity fund**
- Degree Apprenticeship Growth Plan - removing barriers to engagement and establishing the place for and role of targets
 - UVAC Plan: <https://uvac.ac.uk/uvac-calls-for-degree-apprenticeship-growth-plan/>
 - UUK: launched [a ten-point plan](#) at its degree apprenticeship conference on 1 February

QAA EQA of EPA

- Rob Stroud – [guidance and method](#) to readiness checks to approve EPA delivery and provider action plan and EQA monitoring to review progress
- QAA demits DQB Status 20 July – with effect from 1 April 2023
- Soft launch of initial assessments and readiness checks: 4 providers; 15 standards – far heavier burden than initially thought given growth in volumes and complexity in HE
- November 2022 QAA published the plans for the next phase of EQA pending the handover back to the OfS
 - This announcement can be read in full [here](#)
- OfS asked the DQB to prioritise monitoring checks
- December – 31st March, DQB is focussed on monitoring three apprenticeship standards
 - Police Constable
 - Digital and Technology Solutions Professional
 - Advanced Clinical Practitioner
- The OfS announced it will undertake assessments from 1 April
- Providers not assessed by the DQB will need to await guidance from the OfS regarding the method that it intends to take about further assessments



Lifelong Loan Entitlement

- Former Minister Donelan's ambition for the Lifelong Loan Entitlement:

'Post-recovery Britain can become a skills powerhouse, with a further and higher education system that is accessible to all, and that acts as an engine for social mobility – real social mobility which focuses on getting on as much as getting in' (2021)
- **Our key messages:**
 1. We are supportive of the new system and LLE ambition
 2. Need a greater understanding of the level of demand for modular study and typical learner
 3. New system must ensure articulation with degrees with modules that can build into a qualification
 4. Employer contribution and relevance is absent
 5. RPL and system of FE/HE credit transfer needs a new narrative

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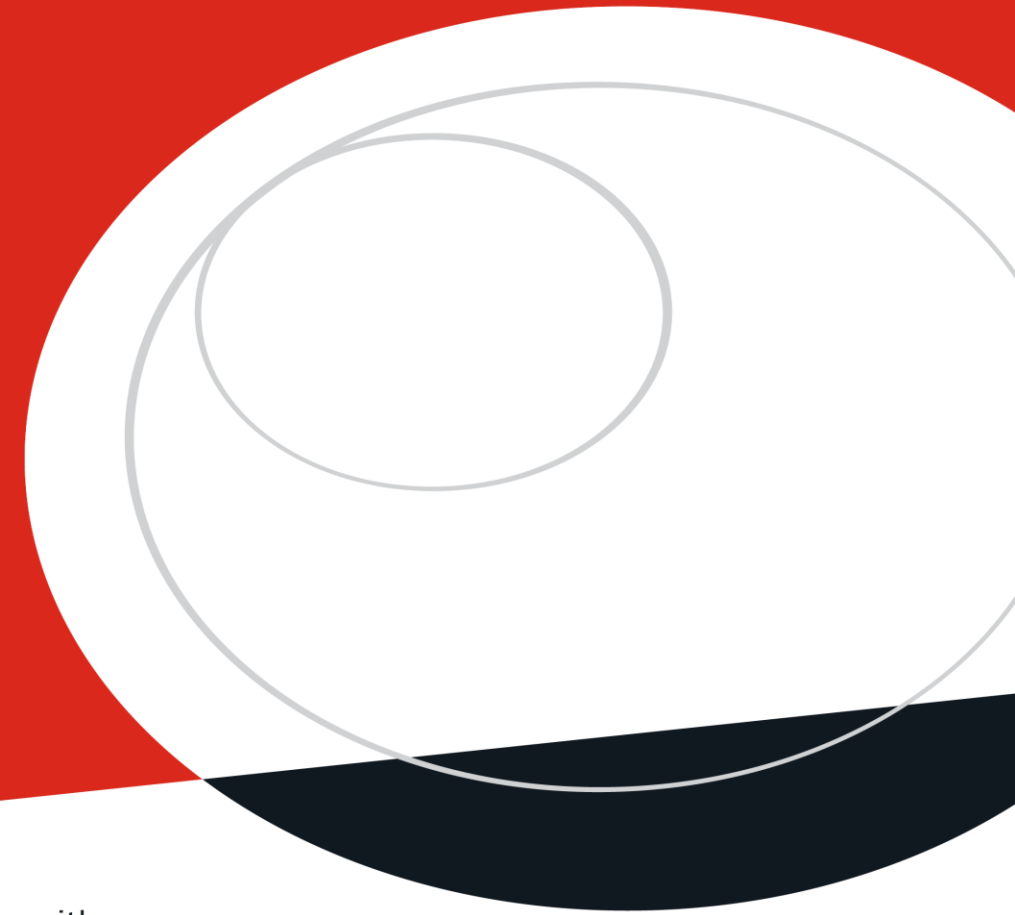
Recognition of Prior Learning - Project

- ****NEW** Knowledge Network** on national standards for RPL
 - LINK to recording from 10 January 2023 [HERE](#)
- Recognising *Talent for Care*: pathways for progression to HE

Call to Action to HE Providers:

- to sign up to a **National Progression Agreement**
- to promote consistent national recognition of the SHCSW apprenticeship standard for entry to HE level healthcare apprenticeships/programmes
- to identify, specific, HE provider programmes that will recognise the SHCSW apprenticeship as meeting entry requirements at local/regional level
- to establish a consistent employer expectation that the SHCSW apprenticeship will be recognised by HE providers

Future Webinars & Support



In partnership with



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Degree Apprenticeship Knowledge Networks

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Degree Apprenticeship Knowledge Networks

Practitioners learning and sharing with colleagues

Discipline based networks have met online this academic session –

1. Social Worker
2. Academic Professional
3. Chartered Manager
4. Police Constable
5. DA Hub Managers/Leads

Recordings have been posted – contact John Lanham for details

Degree Apprenticeship Knowledge Networks

- **Spring 2023 Face to Face meetings**
 - **More time to discuss and share - ~ 10.00 – 15.00 – Structured sessions and network time**
1. **Social Worker** – 24th April, Manchester Met. - [click here to register](#)
 2. **Police Constable** – 3rd May – Salford Uni. - [click here to register](#)
 3. **Chartered Manager** – 10th May – Open Uni. – Milton Keynes - [click here to register](#)
 4. **Academic Professional** – 17th May – Queen Mary, London - [click here to register](#)

Any queries contact John – j.lanham@uvac.ac.uk

Apprenticeship Workforce Development Programme

- Theme 1: Target audience
 - New staff vs Existing
 - Academic teams
 - Other roles across the university involved in delivery – finance, registry etc
- Theme 2: Topics (a flavour of the total !) Ofsted and audit still loom large
 - Governance and accountability
 - Developing Programmes e.g. integrating on/off the job learning, embedding BV
 - Accessibility & Inclusion e.g. Neurodiversity and learning, first in family
 - Induction for staff, employer, apprentice
 - Employer collaboration
- Theme 3: Mode
 - Multi options for each topic
 - Face to face where networking is valuable addition
 - Online short sessions
 - Resources, guides, templates - visual mapping of regulations

UVAC / HEE/Council of Deans of Health Forum – Thursday 23rd February

1. HEE – Key Challenges from Ofsted
2. Leeds Beckett Dean of School of Health – Changes
3. Council of Deans of Health – latest policy position
4. UVAC – RPEL Project Findings and Call to Action

Breakout Forum

1. Main challenges and barriers to change
2. Top priorities – actions that all providers need to take as soon as possible
 - Preparing academics to run an apprenticeship
 - Oversight and strategic leadership – and ownership of the implications
 - Investment in resources

Policy Question: Is the Inspection fit for purpose for essential job roles ?

NEXT STEPS : Recording and Slides: [HERE](#)

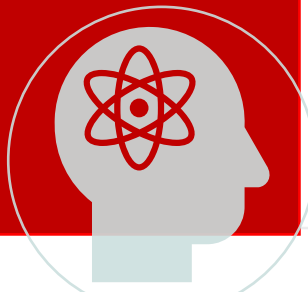
Autumn Session TBC

Webinars & Workshops

- Structing the Apprenticeship Delivery Team:
 - Resourcing – models and numbers
 - Roles and Responsibilities in Schools
- Intervention – improving performance, programme and individual
- Apprenticeship Oversight and Governance
- EQA Framework
- Funding Rules – Early Look
- Subcontracting /Auditing Subcontractors
- Running an Internal Audit
- Measuring Distance Travelled

- **Feedback from you:**
 - See speakers / each other
 - Visible chat functionality
 - More time for questions in the session
- **Response**
 - Move to Go To Train with immediate effect
 - Chat visible, you control your camera and mic
 - Breakout Discussion Groups
- **ACTION**
 - Move current sessions to new dates in April on the new platform – **NO ACTION REQUIRED** – we will move your registration to the new dates

Future



New Platform



Apprenticeship Workforce Development Programme

- Applications are **now open** for the **Apprenticeship Workforce Development (AWD)** programme's **practitioner improvement and collaborative project opportunities**
- These are **six-month projects** with **final reports due on 6 October 2023**
- Two separate project types are on offer:
 1. practitioner improvement projects are small-scale projects open to individuals with access to £5,000 in funding
 2. collaborative projects requiring a minimum of three partners with access to £20,000 in funding
- You will be supported throughout your project by our AWD Project Mentors, who will provide advice and guidance on:
 - Understanding research and project processes
 - Defining project-specific evaluation indicators
 - Project set-up
 - Project methodology, requirements, and professional standards
 - Monitoring project progress
 - Project outputs: qualitative, quantitative and products
 - Reporting and dissemination
- The **final deadline** for project applications is **17 March**, and **grants will be awarded from 23 March**.
- A successful project lead **induction and development day** will take place on **29 March**
- To apply for a project, download the application form and guidance available **HERE** and submit to **awd@aoc.co.uk** by **5pm Friday 17 March**.

Final Word

- **Recording** of this SoTN Address available plus slides ++ **briefing note** on key issues addressed this month can be found [HERE](#)
- Next SoTN Friday, 5 May at 12 noon: [REGISTER HERE](#)
- New UVAC website – due to launch April

