



Degree and Graduate Apprenticeships

Introduction

Degree-apprenticeships (DAs) are a relatively recent addition (2015) to both the apprenticeship reforms and the higher education system across the UK. In Scotland, DAs are called Graduate Apprenticeships. (GAs). DAs and GAs highlight the importance of the higher education qualification, while also recognising the development of appropriate knowledge, skills, and behaviours as part of their academic and work experience blend.

Since their introduction, they have grown in popularity attracting companies, universities, higher education institutions, and candidates; with most recent figures showing that over 40,000 apprentices started a degree-apprenticeship in 2022/23.

Typical DA/ GA composition

- 80% of the time is spent in the workplace of the student employer to gain real-life work experience
- 20% of the time will be at a place of learning, e.g. University
- DAs and GAs are available at levels 6 and 7, equivalent to Bachelor's, Engineering PG DIP and Master's degree respectively
- In England and Northern Ireland, entry qualifications will be at least five GCSEs at 9-4 (or A*-C in the old grading system) including English and maths (Note: For L7 a relevant undergraduate degree at 2:2). In Wales, Level 3 - equivalent to NVQ Level 3 or 2 A-level passes - on the credit and qualifications framework (CQFW), and/or relevant industry experience is required. In Scotland, National 5 grade passes at level C or above in Math's, English, a Science and a Technical subject, Higher grades would be an advantage for an applicant.
- Entry qualifications can also be through lower level apprenticeships and other qualifications like T-Level
- The students will be 18 years old to participate in most DAs and GAs
- The student applies for a DA or GA with the employer (similar to applying for a job)
- The DAs in England are funded and regulated through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and inspected for quality by Ofsted. In Wales, DAs are fully funded by the Welsh Government through Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). In Northern Ireland, funding for the off-the-job training element of DAs is provided by the Department of the Economy (DfE). In Scotland, GAs are funded by the Scottish Funding Council and apprentices apply to the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) for tuition fees. DAs and GAs develop knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required for a specific job role and combine this with academic learning at the appropriate level.
- The programme tests both occupational competence and academic learning and is set-up in one of two ways:
- Integrated DA or GA: this type of degree includes an end-point assessment (EPA), that marks both the end of the apprenticeship and degree programmes, and the student must pass this to achieve both (i.e. the EPA is credit bearing);
- Non-integrated DA or GA: this has a separate EPA, which tests the occupation's duties, along with the KSBs and is separate to the assessment of the degree.

Useful links:

<https://www.ucas.com/apprenticeships/degree-apprenticeships>

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships>

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/higher-education-in-apprenticeships-characteristics-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=1438a081_6

Guidance for HEIs and Accreditors

- The academic accreditation of DAs and GAs only covers AHEP(v4), separate accreditation for coverage of the knowledge, skills and behaviors for the apprenticeship standard is under AAQA.
- There may be differences in the organisation structure for DAs and GAs compared with traditional degrees
- E.g. external commentary on the programme(s) maybe through 'councils' and not industrial advisory boards
- Work based projects may have commercially sensitive information included.
- Panel members should not need to sign NDAs, IET can sign on behalf of the panel.
- Where possible, the University/Company should endeavour to 'edit' the reports suitable for panel review, select appropriate reports or conduct on-site review (appropriate time should be allocated for this).
- If appropriate, the panel should meet with the Work Place Mentors, akin to meeting the Industrial Advisory Board.
- DA and GA students may suffer more well-being issues than traditional undergraduate students
- Support facilities should be made fully available to students at the university and the workplace
- DA and GA students may not have sufficient contact with the university
- DA and GA programmes are often accredited alongside traditional degree programmes. It may be useful:
- To highlight minutes of staff student committee meeting which relate to issues specific to DAs and GAs
- To have mechanisms that ensure the capture of feedback from DAs and GAs
- Check it is delivered by the same team
- Check workload and contact hours are within 30% as sector norm.

Documentation and accreditation process

All requests for AHEP accreditation of a programme delivered as part of a degree apprenticeship will require an AHEP 4 mapping.

Commonality with a currently accredited programme:

If the programme meets the IET 70% commonality policy:

- Commonality mapping for both the modules and assessments, using the IET template
- Samples of assessment where they are different
- Explanation of any differences in delivery and how this is managed and supported

If the programme is between 30% and 50% in common with an accredited programme:

- Follow the same submission and review requirements as a major change review
- Plus the requirements for 70% commonality review stated above.

An Accreditation Visit will be required if:

- The commonality between the accredited programme and DA or GA programme is less than 50%.
- Part or all of the DA or GA programme that covers AHEP learning outcomes is delivered off campus.

Apprenticeship Jargon explained

Academic Year: Can be variable. Refers to when studies commence and end.

Assessment Plan: Plans for on programme assessments and end point assessment.

BIL: Break in Learning (pause in learning, usually requested by employer / apprentice)

Commitment Statement: Contract between Provider, Employer & Apprentice (now called Training Plan)

DBS: Disclosure and Barring Service

EIF: Education Inspection Framework (Education inspection framework (EIF) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk))

End Point Assessment (EPA): synoptic assessment to measure competence (summative assessment before awarding apprenticeship & integrated qualification). It should be noted that only the RAES is currently performing L7 EPA.

ESFA: Education & Skills Funding Agency

FBV: Fundamental British Values

FS: Functional Skills (Maths, English & ICT)

Gateway: Point at which practical period has finished & EPA starts

HEFCW: Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

IAG: initial advice & guidance

IfATE: Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education

ILR: data return to ESFA (Monthly, R1 August, R2 September etc)

KIT: Keep in Touch (meeting)

KSB: Knowledge, Skills & Behaviours (acquired through teaching & working)

Levy: Taxation for Large Enterprise (Pay bill £3million+) Charged at 0.5% Stored in a fund to spend on Apprenticeship Training

LPPED: Learner Passed Planned End Date

Maximum Funding Band: funding for apprenticeship programme

NART: National Apprenticeship Rates Tables

Off the Job (OTJ): learning when not at work (Usually taught sessions)

OFSTED: Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services & Skills

On the Job: learning at work (Usually shadowing, mentoring & undertaking job role)

Practical End Period: On programme learning: total number of delivery hours (teaching)
Also known as Length of Stay

PRM: Progress Review Meeting – held every 12 weeks with employer & apprentice to review progress /issues, set targets & plan. (also known as Tri-Partite review)

QAR: qualification achievement rates

QIP: Quality Improvement Plan

QMM: Quality Management Meeting

QRR: qualification retention rates

RAL: Rolling Action Log

RBIL: return from break in learning

SAR: Self-Assessment Report

SFC: Scottish Funding Council

SME: Small / Medium Enterprise

Training Plan: Schedule of planned delivery (forms part of contract)

Tri-Partite Agreement: Agreement between Provider, Employer & Apprentice – identifying accountabilities

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E5B24006K/PDF/0722