

# An Analysis of the Progression of Advanced Apprentices to Higher Education in England

An investigation into the purposes, intentions and opportunities facing Advanced Apprentices as perceived by learners, employers and providers of higher education

Funded by:



Leading learning and skills

A report by the University Vocational Awards Council  
Carried out by Vic Seddon

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## Foreword

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UVAC has long advocated and promoted the importance of supporting Apprentices who have the ability and drive to benefit from higher education not least as part of the HE sector commitment to widening participation and access. We have championed lifelong learning and in particular the much neglected recognition of work-based learning whenever and wherever it takes place with seamless work-based progression routes where a learner can progress from a level 3 learning programme through higher education at a pace and time to suit individual circumstances and face no artificial barriers. The UVAC position is recognised by Government which has emphasised the importance of supporting Apprentice progression to higher education.

Aim Higher, the Learning and Skills Council, together with individual SSCs and many higher education institutions and further education colleges have since their inception invested time and resource in assisting Apprentices gain entry to higher education. However this is inconsistent and unfortunately, lacks an empirical baseline for monitoring and evaluation of this flagship training policy. There is, for example, a desperate need for a national analysis of the number of Apprentices actually entering higher education along with the machinery necessary to capture such data. Quite apart from the lack of a reliable and verifiable data baseline there is a worrying lack of public information on the Apprentice attempting to enter higher education experience and the specific barriers they face. This comprehensive study was undertaken to begin to provide the answers to these much neglected issues and encourage a discourse amongst the stakeholders in the interests of the Apprentice, further and higher education and the UK economy at a time when it is desperately needed.

We are very grateful to the LSC National Office for supporting the production and publication of the report. In addition we wish to thank all those who readily participated in interviews, surveys and the provision of information needed to inform this report. We strongly recommend consideration by stakeholders of the key observations in this report action that in turn will enable more Apprentices and other work-based learners to benefit from higher education.



Professor Simon Roodhouse  
Chief Executive  
University Vocational Awards Council

## Executive summary

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During 2004/2005 the LSC commissioned UVAC, as the UK representative organisation of over 80 HEIs and FECs committed to influencing, promoting and supporting the development of higher level vocational education and training, to undertake a programme of work to develop opportunities for Advanced Apprentices to progress to and benefit from higher education. The programme of work undertaken focused on the development of sector specific and generic good practice guides, dissemination events, partnership work with UCAS and other agencies and an investigation into progression from Advanced Apprenticeship to higher education. This executive summary summarises the findings and emerging conclusions and recommendations from the investigation

There have been four main purposes of this investigation:

1. To collate statistical evidence on Apprenticeship and related vocational progression to higher education.
2. To assess what systems are in place to capture such data.
3. To obtain information on the experiences of Apprentices who have attempted to enter higher education, and particularly those who succeeded in doing so.
4. To obtain evidence on barriers preventing progression by vocational learners, represented especially by Advanced Apprentices.

**Methods employed** in this investigation included:

- An extensive literature search.
- Questionnaires to every higher education institution and mixed economy college, enquiring into data collected, the purposes to collected data is put in judging the admission of Apprentices and perceptions of barriers to progression to higher education facing Apprentices.
- A second questionnaire to a sample of institutions and colleges, to probe reasons for capturing or not capturing data, based on comments from the first.
- Telephone enquiries to institutions, colleges, Sector Skills Councils, Connexions offices and a range of government agencies to test the acceptability of Advanced Apprentices as entrants to higher education and to gain views on the definition of higher education.
- Meetings with many individuals and groups within government agencies and departments to engage in discussions over data, policy developments and learner numbers.

**Policy on Advanced Apprentices' progression** has developed over a period of five or six years, and is not well understood by all stakeholders in the process, whether they be higher education institutions, further education colleges, training providers, Sector Skills Councils (and the former national training organisations) or Connexions/ careers advisory services, let alone individual learners or employers.

There is evidence that:

- Advanced Apprentices are, on the whole, not being advised properly and probably not prepared for the current range of higher education opportunities.
- There is a misunderstanding of what progression to higher education or, more accurately, higher level learning means. Foundation Degrees are seen by policy makers as the most appropriate progression route for Apprentices, but in reality progression through vocational honours degrees, HNDs, NVQ 4 and 5, professional and higher level trade qualifications may also be appropriate and indeed more likely. Employers, SSCs and indeed careers advisors may also still perceive higher education as 'a three year full-time course' and therefore not particularly appropriate for Apprentices.
- Higher education provision aimed at the needs of Apprentices and their employers will typically require part-time delivery, APEL and the accreditation of work-based learning. Such provision is expensive, difficult to deliver and may be adversely affected by the impact of top-up fees, other policies and funding procedures.
- Higher education institutions, often unintentionally, discriminate against the admission of Apprentices through lack of understanding and as a reflection of academic conservatism.
- The variability and inconsistency in the size of technical certificates within Apprenticeship frameworks can cause HEIs to question whether different frameworks are of the same 'learning value', if they can be considered collectively and whether some Apprenticeship frameworks are suitable for higher education entry whereas other are not.
- Employers seem reluctant to sponsor further learning once the Apprenticeship is completed. Insufficient attention has been placed on defining the benefits of progression for employers (in terms of business development and productivity) and individual Apprentices (in terms of career progression).
- The burden of learning and assessment for Advanced Apprentices is heavy and may be inappropriate to the needs of vocational development, to the extent that it represents a disincentive to commence and/or complete the framework.
- No single organisation has responsibility for the work-based progression agenda and further education/higher education interface – resulting in gaps, inconsistencies and lack of coherence in approaches to supporting Apprentices progress to higher education.

The most obvious finding has been the **shortage of data** on Apprentices' progression. The reasons are not difficult to understand:

- There has been no obligation on higher education institutions to maintain such records.
- Advanced Apprenticeships are not qualifications per se and therefore do not register in the data systems of institutions or agencies such as UCAS, HESA or HEFCE.
- Progression and destination data is available only if successful learners wish to pass on such information and do so.
- When they *are* collected, these data are often assumed to be valuable only when progression is immediate, that is, within a few months of completion of the Apprenticeship. Such speedy progression seems not to be the general expectation of Apprentices themselves or their employers.
- In the overall Apprenticeship learning process, there is no single body charged with maintaining records from initial registration and enrolment, to final completion of framework components, and hence to the next stage of learning at Level 4. As a result, obtaining any information that could be called "data" requires complex statistical matching exercises, to identify individuals accurately and reliably as they move through the educational system, step by step. Such a body or consortium should be formed as a matter of urgency and be inclusive of both the HE and FE sectors.
- The actual number of Apprentices progressing is very small and estimates based on samples are unreliable. Even so, there is evidence to suggest that the number is greater than that detected by normal admissions processes, because not all Apprentices disclose their vocational backgrounds at application.

There are significant structural findings, indicating **lack of understanding** among higher education institutions and raising queries over the Apprenticeship approval procedure:

- Time and again, higher education institutions reported that they would consider applications from holders of vocational qualifications contained within Apprenticeship frameworks, but that Apprenticeships may not satisfy their entry requirement – a contradictory statement revealing ignorance of what constitutes Apprenticeship.
- As a 'customer' of Apprenticeship as a learning product, higher education has been insufficiently involved in the development of Apprenticeship policy, Apprenticeship frameworks or consideration of the 'fitness for purpose' for higher education entry of Apprenticeship frameworks. There is, for example, no specific representation from the higher education sector on the Apprenticeship Approvals Group, even though Advanced Apprentices are now urged to progress to Level 4 qualifications.

There are isolated, unconnected and uncoordinated examples of good practice in both the further and higher education sectors, but impact can be variable and is frequently not measured. Localised approaches to progression are resulting in the continual 'reinvention of the wheel'. Furthermore a purely localised approach has led to national barriers to progression e.g. HE involvement in Apprenticeship policy implementation and framework design being overlooked.

- Some higher education institutions have well-established contacts with local colleges and training companies, so that Apprentices receive special consideration and arrangements are made for their transition to HE.
- Some industries and some Sector Skills Councils, but by no means all, have paid particular attention to higher skills training and education, and have engaged with institutions to develop appropriate programmes.

**Conclusions and recommendations** relate to roles and responsibilities, and to further research which is required:

- The definition of higher education should be broadened to include all level 4 programmes that could be of benefit to the learner and their employer.
- There is a desperate need to educate university admission staff and other higher education staff (academic and curriculum staff) on the components and standards of Advanced Apprenticeships and to gain ownership from such staff by involving them in the Apprenticeship framework development and approval process.
- The recommendations of the Schwarz Report should be extended to include Advanced Apprenticeships and other work-based provision.
- The fitness for purpose for higher education entry of Apprenticeship frameworks and particularly their technical certificate components needs to be revisited – with higher education playing a full and leading role in the process.
- The lack of clear work-based progression routes from Apprenticeship to higher education/higher level learning needs to be resolved. In particular, the value of work-based higher education/higher level learning programmes that would specifically meet the needs of Apprentices and their employers should receive greater recognition in approaches to higher education policy and funding.
- The benefits of progression for the individual learner and employer need to be defined.
- HEIs must be supported through HEFCE, LSC and QCA policies, through the involvement of organisations such as UVAC and FDF to develop provision that will meet the needs of Apprentices (e.g. part-time, focus on APEL, accreditation of work-based learning, support for higher level NVQs and non-prescribed higher education).

- Apprenticeship progression routes take time to develop. Development funding needs to be sustained until these routes are established. Funding methodologies need to reflect the level of resource required to support part-time, work-based learners.
- Advanced Apprentices need to be made more aware of the higher level programmes available to them, of the modes of attendance appropriate to their employment, and of the commitment required in undertaking an HE programme.
- A simpler data capture and retrieval mechanism is essential if vocational policy is to be assessed against the achievements of all sectors involved in Apprentices' progression. This could be achieved through a unique learner identifier attached to learners throughout their learning careers.
- Employers and Sector Skills Councils should be prompted to recognise the value added to Advanced Apprenticeships by further study and training to Level 4, and this should result in new, more appropriate programmes being developed for Apprentices, and more fruitful inter-sector relationships.
- A representative higher education body should be empowered to represent the "higher vocational community" in the Advanced Apprenticeship development and approvals process. This could be UVAC whose remit is immediately consistent with these aims.
- The respective roles of Sector Skills Councils, HE institutions, awarding bodies, the mixed economy colleges and the private training sector needs to be clarified in relation to the design, approval, delivery, quality assurance and certification of Advanced Apprenticeships.
- The Advanced Apprenticeship's status as a framework rather than a qualification needs to be addressed if it is to attain nearer parity of status with conventional university-entrance qualifications, so that it may carry 'tariff points' beyond those attached merely to the highest single component. Whatever decision is made, greater higher education credibility needs to be given to the Apprenticeship certificate. Higher education credibility is unlikely to be achieved if the SSC role as 'sole awarding body' remains unaltered.
- Research should be undertaken on the progression of Apprentices and their success in and following higher education, analysed by framework, by industry and by age. This will enable policy makers and employers to judge the suitability of policy targets, employment experience, qualifications and the Apprenticeship framework in relation to the expectations and demand of young people.
- In particular, the timing of and delay in such progression should be analysed to assess the most appropriate policy schedule, qualifications and career enhancement to obtain best value from the Advanced Apprenticeship as a nationally recognised framework of learning.
- A national database of good practice should be generated, so that Sector Skills Councils, further and higher education institutions, the QCA, awarding bodies and employers may be assured of the quality and relevance of the provision that goes to make up the full Apprenticeship experience.

Advanced Apprenticeship can be regarded by many as a workforce development product that is now being shoehorned into a role as a higher education entry qualification. There is a clear tension between these respective roles, but with co-operation from all stakeholders a balance could be achieved. However, action is required from those involved in both Apprenticeship and higher education development and delivery. Otherwise, the benefits of higher education will unfairly and arbitrarily be restricted to a very limited number of Advanced Apprentices.

## 1. Introduction

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### Scope of this study

In many occupations and vocational sectors, the Advanced Apprenticeship framework has become the standard training programme for young employees and it has been valued highly for its work experience and the associated qualifications. Is Apprenticeship intended for employment or for progression to higher qualifications? The answer has been “Yes” to both but there seems to be a conflict between content and purpose, and this has been reflected in many responses to the surveys employed in this investigation.

Advanced Apprentices take on a heavy commitment when they commence their frameworks. They now must study for two separate accredited qualifications and also engage in two distinct programmes of work-preparation, alongside actual employment. It has been important to investigate the nature of this “learning burden” and relate it to success rates, and thence to progression rates.

There is now explicit promotion of the Advanced Apprenticeship as a means of progression into higher education. However, the diverse nature of higher education in this context, coupled with some university reluctance to make special provision for vocational students, has accompanied relatively low progression rates from Apprenticeships. Surveys yield a variety of institutional opinions from “no problem whatsoever” to “we don’t accept Apprentices to our programmes” and this has been explored.

In general, completion of an Advanced Apprenticeship has not been recorded for “educational” purposes. Consequently, even if official policy targets on Apprentices’ progression were being met, there would currently be no way to detect it. Within this investigation, analysis of learner data has led to estimates of participation but, more importantly, the nature of data capture and management has been questioned and observations made.

Recommendations arising from this investigation concern the nature and content of the advance Apprenticeship, attitudes within the higher education sector, the intentions of employers and the Apprentices themselves, and the reliability of data used to make policy and to assess its outcomes.

### About UVAC

The University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) was established in 1999 to champion and influence the development of higher vocational learning. The Council is a membership organisation made up largely of HEIs and FECs. Its objectives and work are supported by corporate members who include the LSC, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), UCAS, employers and Sector Skills Councils. It also works closely with strategic awarding body partners.

UVAC’s mission is to champion vocational learning. It does this by advocating, lobbying and representing the interests of its members and by providing practical support through products and services. These services include conferences, good practice guides, a research programme on topics such as the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) and vocational progression; and a range of accreditation services covering Foundation Degrees, professional development programmes and initiatives to support progression from Apprenticeship and vocational qualifications to higher education.

### Acknowledgements

The author is grateful for the time generously given by people surveyed and interviewed whilst gathering material for this report, particularly registry and admissions staff in many colleges and universities, staff of Sector Skills Councils, DfES, HEFCE, HESA, LSC, UCAS, AimHigher, Action on Access, City & Guilds, Edexcel, NCFE and Connexions offices. They provided information vital to an understanding of the issues explored in this report, and offered candid opinions on how progression is affected by their activities. I am also grateful to the chief executive and staff of UVAC for their comments and assistance.

**V J Seddon**

## 2. Objectives of the study and methodologies

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### 2.1 The remit for this investigation

- Produce a report that collates the current evidential base regarding Apprenticeship and vocational progression to higher education, assess what systems are in place to capture this data and how methods of data collection and analysis could be improved
- The report will also, using appropriate quantitative and qualitative data (subject to availability) identify the existence and use of existing models of progression from Advanced Apprenticeship to HE, in what sectors, to what HE provision and on what basis (e.g. part-time)
- An assessment of the barriers preventing wider progression will also be included in the report for sharing and consideration with others working to advance and develop progression routes for vocational and work-based learners.

The investigation constituted part of a wider study of the experiences of vocational learners, including their progression (or otherwise) to higher levels of study and qualification.

### 2.2 Methodologies

The following approaches were adopted in the investigation.

#### 2.2.1 Literature search

It was necessary to establish:

- what learning and other experiences comprised the Advanced Apprenticeship programme
- whether or not progression to higher education represented an assumption, a policy, an expectation or a reality
- opinions expressed on the viability of Advanced Apprenticeships and related vocational qualifications in the progression of those individuals to higher levels of study and in employment
- the nature of published information on progression, whether it be numerical in form, based on samples or populations, or in the form of secondary or surrogate data derived from presumed patterns of learner experience
- examples of good practice in the preparation of Apprentices for progression to higher education and their subsequent experiences on higher level programmes.

#### 2.2.2 Survey of institutions

This was undertaken in three phases:

- A pilot survey of a small number (eventually eight) institutions drawn randomly from among higher education and the mixed economy group (MEG)<sup>1</sup> of further education colleges. This process was used to test the appropriateness of the survey, its length, the simplicity of the questions, and to assess the kinds of subjective information that respondents may wish to provide. As a result, the survey questionnaire was reduced in scale and data questions were simplified. One confusion, not resolved until the later telephone survey, centred on the MEG experience of providing NVQ Level 3, the Advanced Apprenticeship itself and then the subsequent higher education progression route. It was initially impossible to distinguish between the number of Advanced Apprentices engaged in the college and those that had progressed to higher education. This was a limitation of the initial questions and was adjusted in the mainstream survey.
- A second survey of every higher education institution (HEI) in England and all the MEG colleges, apart from those included in the pilot survey. The shortened survey is presented in Annex 3. There were 15 responses from HEIs and 8 from MEG colleges.
- Almost all HEIs said that they did not maintain records of Advanced Apprentices progressing to their programmes, mainly because there was no need to do so and they did not believe that it would affect their provision. This response was at variance with our knowledge that the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) has required the logging of Apprentices since September 2004; that is, in the current academic year. Most of the MEG colleges responded to say that they did keep those data and they would do so for internal reasons, whether it was a requirement or not. Consequently, named individuals in 45 HEIs were telephoned and the same question asked again. On this occasion, 38 of the 45 responded initially that they DID keep Apprentice data. It subsequently became apparent that they have started to keep data on NVQ and technical certificate<sup>2</sup> but that few HEIs are aware of the Apprentices joining their programmes. The reason is simple: entrant to HEIs volunteer information on qualifications and the Advanced Apprenticeship is not a qualification. When pressed, only a small number of new universities claimed to record Apprentice entrant accurately and that was based on the types of programmes being offered. Some Foundation Degrees, BTEC Higher awards and some NVQ Level 4 programmes have been designed specifically for advance Apprentices, so that the recording of their progression is more of a housekeeping exercise than a matter of HESA returns. At this stage in the investigation, the findings of Hughes (UVAC)<sup>3</sup> were crucial to the focussing of questions and these findings confirmed hers, as will be seen in Chapters 7 and 9.

<sup>1</sup> There are 20 MEG colleges which have formed themselves into a loose association based on the provision of higher education (Level 4 in the 1999 national qualifications framework) to at least 500 learners or about £1 million of direct HEFCE funding

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 4 for the significance of these qualifications within the Advanced Apprenticeship

<sup>3</sup> Report on HEI Admissions Services: Pauline Hughes, UVAC, 2004

### 2.2.3 Survey of related organisations

Following receipt of the survey results, it became necessary to conduct a small survey of those organisations whose activities are presumed to influence and guide Advanced Apprentices in their choice of higher education programmes. Accordingly, a telephone survey was conducted with:

- Nine Sector Skills Councils; generally through their senior managers concerned with qualifications, standards, and relations with awarding bodies: to discover what data were kept and how their qualification strategy was developing
- Six Connexions services in different parts of England; this was undertaken by posing as an enquirer (parent or teacher) into the progression possibilities for an 18 or 19 year old advance Apprentice nearing the end of the framework
- Five major qualification awarding bodies connected with NVQ provision and/or technical certificates; to discover what data was available to estimate the number of Advanced Apprentices progressing to Level 4 in their portfolios of qualifications
- Four local offices of the Learning & Skills Council, generally through their Work-Based Learning Manager (or equivalent), based on personal knowledge of individuals and exploring the availability of local data on progression of vocational award holders.

### 2.2.4 Meetings and conversations with related agencies

Following the initial survey returns, meetings or telephone conversations were held with individuals or "committees" of each of the following, with the intention of exploring the shortage of data and lack of policy development in various aspects of Apprenticeship provision.

- HESA
- HEFCE
- LSC and HEFCE together
- LSDA
- DfES, Moorfoot
- UCAS
- AimHigher (P4P) in various parts of England
- Action on Access
- Foundation Degree Forward
- Connexions
- A number of qualification awarding bodies.

## 2.3 Conclusions

The processes used in this investigation led to one obvious conclusion: that no one agency or individual in England knows the number of Advanced Apprentices progressing to higher education, however it is defined. The remainder of the investigation represented an attempt to synthesise the processes used by all the agencies and organisations, and so arrive at useful numerical information and structural details.

Very few participants and respondents to our survey query that the Advanced Apprenticeship is a useful and beneficial framework of occupational learning. Likewise, the benefits of progression are widely recognised, although variably and in relation to occupational strategies. The main areas of contention are the timing of learning progression, and the validity of the current range of qualifications at further and at higher education levels.

Overall, the valuable Advanced Apprenticeship programme appears to lack sufficient guidance on HE opportunities, there is often insufficient support for Advanced Apprentices in HE and a lack of emphasis on the value of work-based learning in HE delivery. These latter include more appropriate assessment style and volume, accreditation of work-related and work-based learning, and suitable preparation for advanced study.

### 3. Policy on Apprenticeship development and progression

The policy and practices behind the development of the Apprentice programme, and its base as a progression route to higher education, have evolved over a period of time. The “Greenwich speech”<sup>4</sup> outlined a range of boundary issues, and proposals for consideration by further and higher education sectors. It took some years for the purposes of the Apprenticeship programme to be decided with sufficient clarity that it could be aligned with those of higher education, at least as a potential collaboration.

#### 3.1 Success for All

The first substantive statements appeared in the Green-White paper “Success for All”<sup>5</sup>:

*“There are also employers that provide excellent examples where their best Apprentices progress to management positions through work-based higher education.” and*

*“...increasing the proportion of young people starting a Modern Apprenticeship; improving basic skills for adults; and reducing the proportion of adults who lack a level 2 qualification. Achieving these will raise success rates for all qualifications and significantly contribute to our plans for higher education..”*

These statements were interpreted at the time by further education colleges and the relatively new Learning & Skills Council as an innovative approach to raising progression across the FE-HE boundary. What was not clear in this quotation was the link between level 2 qualifications, adult basic skills and the transition to higher education. From this survey, the uncertainty remains for many providers and employers, as analysed in Chapter 6. The link between Apprenticeship and higher education was only hinted at, and did not figure large in the thinking of work-based training organisations, colleges or planners, and certainly not in higher education, again as analysed in Chapter 6.

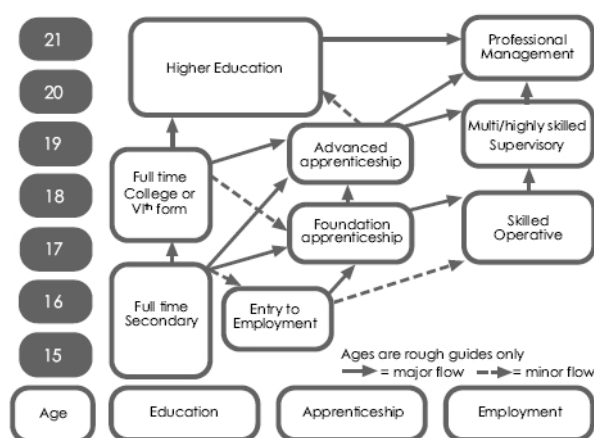
*Success for All* also formalised the activities and nature of the Graduate Apprenticeship, informal approaches to which have been offered by various universities for many years. During this investigation, it became necessary, on a few occasions, to explain and distinguish between Advanced Apprentices and Graduate Apprentices, even for those institutions which have offered the latter in engineering and civil engineering, for example.

#### 3.2 The Way to Work (Cassels Report 2001)

This report<sup>6</sup> suggested a radical reform of the Apprenticeship programme and attempted to clarify the role of Apprenticeship, as a learning outcome as well as a process, in the spectrum of employability-related qualifications. However, the role of Advanced Apprenticeship as a preparation for higher education is not enlarged but seen as a potential or “minor” route. This was interpreted as meaning “small numbers” and seems still to be so in many quarters.

*“... it will be integrated within the national education system and the labour market, forming a bridge between the two. It will encourage progression from secondary education through a clear entitlement to Apprenticeship, and foster progression to higher education through curricular linkages to degrees as well as financial aid to individuals. At the same time it will be a major supplier of intermediate skills to the labour market. The diagram represents what we envisage.”*

Even so, for almost the first time, Advanced Apprenticeship is portrayed as part of the progression route from full-time secondary education to higher education. Rather more likely seems to be the transition from Apprenticeship to higher level supervisory employment and professional management. As will be seen later in this report, these two transitions are still envisaged as the primary avenues for successful Apprentices, and not immediately in time but after a period gaining experience in employment.



Source: *The Way to Work*

The LSC response was positive and prompted the comment,

*“We are ... exploring the relationship between Modern Apprenticeships, Advanced Modern Apprenticeships and Foundation Degrees, as well as innovative proposals for further and higher education college mergers.”<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> David Blunkett, Greenwich, 15 February 2000

<sup>5</sup> *Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training – Our Vision for the Future*, DfES, November 2002 (Described commonly as Green-White because it appeared in White Paper form but in a green coloured cover and with consultation as one of its purposes.)

<sup>6</sup> *Modern Apprenticeships: The Way to Work*. The Report of the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee; Chairman Sir John Cassels, October 2001, pp 5 and 6

<sup>7</sup> The first Annual Report and Accounts of the Learning and Skills Council, March 2002

### 3.3 National Skills Strategy

This document<sup>8</sup> made explicit what, until then, had been assumed by educational planners to be government policy, or even a priority: that Advanced Apprentices *should* be prepared for progression to higher education.

*“Supporting sectors that want to develop stronger progression routes from Modern Apprenticeships to higher level vocational qualifications, including Foundation Degrees, ensuring that different funding systems do not create unnecessary barriers.” [section 5.24 (e)]*

It was significant that the equivalent statement for higher education<sup>9</sup> made only a single mention of Apprentices and their potential progression to the higher sector.

*“5.25 As more people from non-traditional backgrounds go into higher education we must make sure that they are well-served when they get there. The application rate for mature students is continuing to rise, including applications for part-time study. Following that trend, we expect more people to study while at work, perhaps building on Modern Apprenticeships.”*

The reason for this oblique reference lay in the main definition of higher education used for that White Paper: programmes delivered in institutions of higher education, leading to diplomas, degrees and related higher level professional accredited qualifications. If that White Paper had considered detailed progression of Apprentices to NVQ Level 4, BTEC Higher National Certificate or any of the higher trade qualifications, the document may not have been taken seriously as a consultation paper for HEIs, and that was its intention. The only mentions of HND<sup>10</sup>, for example, are to propose that it be incorporated into the Foundation Degree framework. That is, to subsume and “disguise” it as a part-degree programme of interest to HEIs.

The Campaign for Learning<sup>11</sup> pointed out the lack of foresight in the Higher Education White Paper, so that it failed to consider the consequences of progression to higher education after a delay owing to work or other occupational experience.

*“3.36 55% of 21-29 year olds in higher education study full-time and 45% study part-time. Hence, it is likely that for young adults in work combining full-time earning with part-time learning will be an important option. However, the HE white paper does not specifically mention progression by 22-29s into higher education in general let alone to part-time Foundation Degrees in particular.”*

### 3.4 Foundation Degree Task Force

At about this time (September 2004), the level of interest in Apprentices and the volume of potential higher level learners became apparent to many agencies and individuals as if for the first time. The FD Task Force report<sup>12</sup> made its position clear:

*“1.13 There are [sic] a number of factors that should help Foundation Degrees achieve the status and recognition necessary for sustained success. Their development and promotion, as a contribution to higher education expansion and to meeting higher skills needs, ... is demonstrating that it is meeting existing needs, but it is also forward looking... extends the principles set out in the White Paper, 21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential... into vocational higher education... an important component of the progression framework for the differently qualified young adults ... and those taking part in Apprenticeships which were re-launched in May 2004”*

and also:

*“2.30 We note that so far progression from Apprenticeships to higher education has been weak... We recommend that the DfES, HEFCE and the LSC continue to give priority to improving progression from Apprenticeships to Foundation Degrees in response to employers’ needs.”*

And elsewhere

*“We are confident, on the basis of our analysis, that the expectation of 50,000 students on Foundation Degrees by 2006 will be realised... believe that demand will grow substantially if some or all of the following occur:*

*... The potential of Advanced Apprenticeships as an entry route into Foundation Degrees is realised...*

*... radical reforms to the Apprenticeship system... Advanced Apprenticeships will be available at level 3, with the opportunity to progress onto Foundation Degrees. Apprenticeships will also be available to adults and not restricted to people under 25...*

*....The importance of a NQF level 5 route to higher qualifications through Foundation Degrees will enhance the attractiveness of Apprenticeships...*

*... However, there will be significant time delays before many of these influences can take effect”...*

This final point seems to be borne out by the findings of this investigation: immediate transition of Apprentices to higher education is not regarded by many agencies as feasible or even as desirable. This opinion is presented in Chapter 7. Even so, the potential for a strong link between Advanced Apprenticeship and Foundation Degree is explicit and justified, and became part of strategic folk-lore from that time forward.

<sup>8</sup> 21st Century Skills: Unleashing our Potential, Skills Strategy White Paper, DfES, July 2003

<sup>9</sup> The Future of Higher Education White Paper, DfES, January 2003

<sup>10</sup> The first example of many: §3.21 “To achieve this aim we propose to: Make Foundation Degrees the standard two-year qualification by enabling HNCs and HNDs to be incorporated in the Foundation Degree framework.”

<sup>11</sup> Setting the learning policy agenda: Post-19 Higher Education and Adult Skills: the HE White Paper, Campaign for Learning Conference, February 2003

<sup>12</sup> Foundation Degree Task Force; Report to Ministers, HEFCE, September 2004

### 3.5 14-19 White Paper 2005

The progression route for Apprentices (as a policy but not always in reality as this investigation discovered), has now become well established and formulated, although not taken up by large numbers. This White Paper<sup>13</sup> has set the agenda without any confusion:

*"7.12...young people achieving the level 2 Diploma during the course of KS4, along with other GCSEs, should be well prepared to move onto a work-based route through Apprenticeship or on to an A level route as well as to progress on to a level 3 Diploma and then into HE.*

*7.13. We want to work with the HE sector to ensure that diplomas provide a route into HE. We will involve the sector in the design of the diplomas, to ensure that they provide a proper preparation for study at university level. Universities and other HE providers will need to ensure that their admissions procedures can fairly assess young people who follow the Diploma route."*

By inference, the final expectation is taken widely to apply also to Advanced Apprentices although not stated explicitly. This statement is a direct reflection of the conclusions in the Schwartz Report<sup>14</sup> although that report does not refer directly to Apprentices' progression. As will be apparent in Chapter 7, this exhortation is yet to be realised in most HEIs, although there are notable examples of the good practice that Schwartz has indicated and recommended.

### 3.6 The Higher Education White Paper

In January 2003, the Secretary of State at the DfES introduced this White Paper.<sup>15</sup> The link to vocational learning was made clear, as was the expansion of higher education via new routes for learning and scholarship:

*The case for expanding higher education is strong. But we will not compromise on quality. We want the bulk of the expansion to come through new types of qualification, better tailored to the needs of students and the economy.*

We will:

- Continue to increase participation towards 50 per cent of those aged 18–30, mainly through two-year work-focused Foundation Degrees;
- Work with employers to develop more Foundation Degrees, providing financial incentives for students, strengthening links between further and higher education and creating better pathways for progression;
- Encourage more flexibility in courses, to meet the needs of a more diverse student body and improve support for those doing part-time degrees.

and

- ...we expect more people to study while at work, perhaps building on Modern Apprenticeships. So there must be more flexible ways of learning that attract people with different demand and commitments...

Amid many other features and proposals for higher education, these suggestions gave heart to those proposing greater vocational development and links with work-based learning approaches.

### 3.6 Framework for Achievement

In December 2004, the Qualification & Curriculum Authority (QCA) issued its consultation paper<sup>16</sup> and the question of Apprentice progression to higher education was assumed to be answered:

*"Providers will ... want to know how the new framework may relate to the development of any new 14–19 diplomas, the Apprenticeship reform programme and how it can assist progression to higher education..."*

That is the only reference to the matter and little other guidance is provided for responses to the consultation. Later references to Apprenticeship carry no implication of high level progression or of the involvement of higher education institutions. For example:

*"As part of the Apprenticeship reform programme, LSC, QCA and SSDA are working with SSCs to take forward work on Apprenticeships and credit. The framework will encompass awards made to people on Apprenticeships, and we will be reviewing models of Apprenticeship to ensure they develop to be compatible with awards in the new framework."<sup>17</sup>*

Nonetheless, the new qualification framework is intended to provide transparency, simplicity, convertibility and progression through a variety of mechanisms:

*"To make the framework simpler, we propose:*

- *use of a standard template for all units*
- *support for collaboration between different users of the framework in developing units and qualifications*
- *rationalising unit development through the establishment of a unit databank*
- *use of credit value to indicate the relative size of achievements*
- *development of a credit transcript within which all individual achievements will be recognised*
- *establishment of a standard format for all qualification titles.*

<sup>13</sup> 14-19 Education and Skills, DfES, Cm 6476, February 2005

<sup>14</sup> Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice; Report of Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (Chairman: Prof Steven Schwartz), September 2004

<sup>15</sup> The Future of Higher Education, DfES; 2003

<sup>16</sup> A framework for achievement: recognising qualifications and skills in the 21st century, p.10, QCA, December 2004

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.28

*This range of features will help all users understand the relative values of different achievements within the framework more easily. It will clarify progression opportunities for individual learners. It will simplify decision-making for those who offer employment, career progression or further learning within the framework.*<sup>18</sup>

The sense of this section is that all manner of qualifications should become available for the purposes of skills development, career enhancement and progression to higher qualifications. There is one aspect of Apprenticeship which has not been considered in the Framework for Achievement: Apprenticeships are not qualifications. It remains to be seen whether the consultation responses will force this issue, so that Apprenticeship frameworks themselves are seen as valid learning experiences over and above their component qualifications.

### 3.6 Foundation Degree Sector Frameworks

In the opinions of some planners and providers, one of the most helpful concepts has been that of the sector framework, in which each of the Sector Skills Councils would work with the further and higher education sectors and other learning providers, and with awarding bodies. The result has been intended to create an agreed framework of learning incorporating skills, knowledge and understanding for employment and progression to higher levels. There is evidence from this investigation that SSCs are engaged with Level 2 and Level 3 developments but not yet fully with level 4 and progression to higher education. In 2003, a progress report by Edexcel<sup>19</sup> indicated plans for sector frameworks linked to Foundation Degrees. There is not a mention of Apprenticeships but the implication was adopted as policy by some colleges of further education, particularly in the anticipated allocation of development funds.

*...extra money is being lined up to support Foundation Degrees, £32m for up to 2006 according to the HE White Paper. The big wadges are £8.5m development money channelled through HEFCE to HEIs and Colleges and £8.0m to FDF for sector based development work. That leaves £2.25m for the development of public sector frameworks where the NHSU is taking an early lead, £2.00m for individual company support, £6.10m for advertising and promotion and £5.15m for support costs...*

Foundation Degree Forward (FDF) has promoted good practice in the design and approval of Foundation Degrees and in 2003 published an array of guidelines. It is noticeable that Apprenticeships are not mentioned in its principal publications, as in *How to Develop a Foundation Degree*<sup>20</sup>, which was introduced as

*...aimed at people in businesses, public sector employers, Sector Skills Councils, universities and colleges who want advice or support in designing and setting up a Foundation Degree...*

In relation to SSCs, the advice was:

*...Sector Skills Councils are ... experts in their sector. Labour market analyses undertaken by Sector Skills Councils identify skills gaps that a Foundation Degree might address. Sector Skills Councils can help to develop the Foundation Degree and promote it among potential students, employers and employees. Their endorsement of a Foundation Degree is likely to be a critical factor in its success, so they should be involved from the start where the Foundation Degree is in a sector covered by a Sector Skills Council...*

Twenty-one examples and case studies were provided in the document but none of them related to Apprentices even in such sector-related programmes as health & social care, ICT, early years development (mentioning NVQ3 in this case but not the Apprenticeships which were developed already), travel & tourism, print media, and so on.

Since 2003, the notion of sector frameworks has developed significantly in the context of Foundation Degrees but there is still scant reference to Apprenticeships. The most recent developments still make no mention of the Advanced Apprenticeships, even though they are led by SSCs whose record has been good in the Apprenticeships context<sup>21</sup>. Many HEIs and colleges of further education are engaged in these developments<sup>22</sup> but still Apprenticeships apparently are not viewed as central to Foundation Degree promotion, content or employment relevance. The opinions expressed by UVAC<sup>23</sup> in March 2004 remain valid and reflect the concerns of many participants in the Apprenticeship programme:

*... vast majority of Foundation Degrees have been developed as an entry into work model, with the second workforce development model largely ignored ... of crucial importance that more emphasis is placed on the development of Foundation Degrees for those in work, which are innovatively delivered and meet the genuine needs of learners and their employers...*

and

*...we remain to be convinced that... Foundation Degree sector frameworks will be sufficiently robust, flexible or influential to support and enable higher education to respond to level 4 skills needs identified by SSCs...*

and

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.12

<sup>19</sup> *Foundation Degrees: Meeting the need for higher level skills*, Edexcel, October 2003

<sup>20</sup> *How to Develop a Foundation Degree*; Foundation Degree Forward, November 2003

<sup>21</sup> SkillsActive; Foundation Degree Frameworks; major consultation events in April 2005 SEMTA; Work-Based and Vocational Learning in Aimhigher: P4P; presentation July 2004 E-skillsUK/Skills for Business, conference March 2005

<sup>22</sup> For example, E-SkillsUK, *ibid.* Eleven universities and four colleges but no industrial partners are mentioned

<sup>23</sup> Summary of Response to Foundation Degree Task Force Questionnaire, UVAC March 2004

*“Progression from AMA (and NVQ Level 3) to Foundation Degrees even in the same subject area is under-developed. Unfortunately, AMA frameworks have usually been designed and are usually delivered without the involvement of higher education... Foundation Degree programmes have typically been designed and delivered without considering the needs of Apprentices. Not only is AMA/Foundation Degree progression important to meet the widening participation agenda, it is critical in order to reconcile the Government’s objective for 50% of young people to participate in higher education by 2010 and the Government’s target for 28% of young people to commence Modern Apprenticeship by 2004. The LSC has supported some very useful work through the development of local HEI/SSC compacts; other work has been supported through P4P/Aim Higher. Unfortunately, although often locally very valuable, insufficient emphasis has been placed on developing sector/occupationally specific progression routes that are understood and accepted among employers, individual learners and transferable across the higher education sector...”*

Judging by the number of seminars and conferences in the public arena, there are signs that SSCs and HEIs are beginning to collaborate in the development of sector frameworks that could attract Apprentice entrants to higher education. Evidence from this investigation suggests that this work has not achieved high priority until now. One of our SSC respondents said,

*“Perhaps that’s the next thing we should be working on, now that we’ve sorted out Level 2, almost!”*

### 3.7 Sector agreements

In the national skills strategy consultation, the concept of sector agreements was presented as a mechanism to “...tease out the demand capacity...”<sup>24</sup> of the employment and learning sectors

Within the Foundation Degree “movement”, the official statement provided a basis for potential collaboration between the various sectors:

*“...Universities, higher and further education colleges can work with the Sector Skills Councils ... and Regional Development Agencies ... to develop Foundation Degrees that meet local, regional and national needs. The development of SSCs Sector Agreements announced in the Skills Strategy White Paper, and the work of the RDA-led regional skills partnerships will be two ways in which these proposals can become a reality...”*<sup>25</sup>

Specific sector bodies have adopted sector agreements as guidance on their relationships with SSCs, educational institutions and the LSC. For example, from SkillfastUK<sup>26</sup>:

*“The skills strategy aims to help improve productivity and competitiveness, by creating a more highly skilled, more productive workforce through: ...creating sector agreements to clarify the training investment required by the government, employers and individuals in response to current and future business needs...”*

The national skills agenda appeared to be prepared to put in place, and implement, sector agreements as important features of strategic planning<sup>27</sup>:

*“...sector skills agreements will feed through to regional and local planning and funding decisions on training supply... the crucial form of leverage enabling the models which emerge to be delivered in volume through the normal budgets of local LSCs...”*

*... we do want robust sector skills agreements to be a powerful influence on the existing allocation method...sector agreements will act as a turnkey to releasing funding more in line with business demand....*

*... evaluate carefully the experience of the first SSCs in delivering skills agreements, as a basis for extending the programme across the network...*

*... we will build a strong interface between the Skills for Business Network and the RDA and LSC operations, so that future sector skills agreements can gain direct leverage over the allocation of funds to training providers...*

*... each SSC working with the LSC nationally on the design of sector skills...”*

Over the past year, major developments have taken place and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) has issued guidelines for sector agreements.<sup>28</sup> A small number of Pathfinder agreements are in force, notably in the public service and health sectors. However, the role of the higher education institutions is quite unclear and there seems little impetus for their engagement.

The stage now seems to be set for sector agreements to be reached. The concepts and terminology are in common usage but there is little evidence from this investigation that such agreements are actually in place to guide planners and providers in the Level 3-to-Level 4 transition. As one of our SSC respondents commented in this investigation, *“Who is meant to start this off, do you think? Without the HEIs, I don’t think there’s anything we can do. Who’s going to instruct them to take part? Without them, progression simply isn’t going to happen.”*

<sup>24</sup> A phrase used by many observers; for example; *Setting the learning policy agenda: Post-19*, Campaign for Learning, July 2003, p.11

<sup>25</sup> *Foundation Degrees: Meeting the need for higher level skills*; DfES (AimHigher; Foundation Degree Forward) 2003, p.5

<sup>26</sup> East Midlands Clothing & Textiles Cluster—*emcat Courier*: Oct 2003, p.6.

<sup>27</sup> *21st Century Skills*: *ibid.*, p.53

<sup>28</sup> Specification for the scope and delivery of sector skills agreements, SSDA, February 2004

### 3.7 Sector qualification strategies

An essential component of the new Framework for Achievement will be Sector Qualification Strategies, developed jointly by Sector Skills Councils and awarding bodies. The government expects "...at least eight Sector Qualification Strategies would be in place by March 2005, and all sectors will have strategies in place by March 2006..."<sup>29</sup>

In fact, at the time of writing, this has not happened but, anyway, the concept of sector qualification agreements as currently defined appears to be inadequate for the broader skills agenda leading to progression for successful award holders and Apprentices.

All such agreements relate to QCA approved qualifications, but the Apprenticeship is not a qualification. Progression to higher education requires engagement and approval by HEIs and they are not involved in the process. Current agreement plans seem to relate entirely to Levels 1 and 2, and therefore will contain little relevance to Advanced Apprenticeships for some years to come.

As an additional feature, Graduate Apprenticeships are available and intended not only to improve the employability of graduates but also to expand higher education opportunities to employees. Graduate Apprenticeships are based upon frameworks defined by the relevant Sector Skills Council and bring together Key Skills and NVQs/National Occupational Standards with undergraduate or post-graduate degrees. Institutions that develop such programmes, which tie together vocational and academic learning, and earlier learning experiences, may obtain accreditation. There has been considerable recent development towards a consortium approach to such accreditation, which exemplifies the broadening role of Sector Skills Councils, higher education institutions and the national vocational qualification "movement".<sup>30</sup>

## Conclusions

It is apparent that Apprenticeship, Level 3 qualifications, the role of Sectors Skills Councils, and the possibilities of progression have been considered in detail by a large number of individuals and agencies. Certain conclusions can be reached:

- The progression of Apprentices into higher education has been envisaged by FE and Apprenticeship policy-makers for some years and included in official statements
- There is considerable policy support for institutions, awarding bodies and the employment sector to make progress on this aspect of higher skills development
- In principle, all the parts of the "jigsaw" are available but, as yet, no neat transition mechanism has been formulated for Advanced Apprentices to progress into higher education
- Many of the main participants in the HE-progression agenda have not yet exercised their full influence in making the transition possible
- The role of higher education institutions has been mentioned widely and is being employed sparingly, but is not well understood even by many of those institutions themselves

- The joint roles of QCA, the SSCs, HEIs, awarding bodies and the further education sector may have been described and formulated by policy makers, but there is evidence that those participants are unsure as to the leaders and followers in the process of developing progression for Apprentices
- Qualification frameworks and other structures to support higher level skill development seem to be difficult to apply to Advanced Apprenticeship, mainly because it is not a qualification. As a result, its components fall within the policy influence but not the overall framework itself.

Chapter 5 outlines the options that are available to Apprentices in qualifications and employment. Much of the policy development in this chapter is reflected partly in chapter 5, as are the deficiencies in the educational provision.

<sup>29</sup> House of Commons Questions to Ministers, 14 December 2004, Hansard Column 1037W

<sup>30</sup> UVAC Annual Conference *Connecting with the World of Work*, 4-5 November 2004, York

## 4. Review of the Apprenticeship framework

The Modern Apprenticeship programme was introduced in 1995, with the intention of correcting the shortage of work-based learning after many years of abandonment by industrial and commercial sectors within the UK economy. Inspection of Apprenticeships commenced in 1998 but, by 2000, it was clear that opportunities for their incorporation within the government's overall national learning strategy had not been taken up in the numbers originally expected. The Cassels Report<sup>31</sup> proposed reforming the Apprenticeship scheme and making it more attractive, and introducing further participation from industry and commerce. Also, a new terminology was introduced, such that the frameworks were to be classified as Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships. Since then, Sector Skills Councils have been charged with setting standards and frameworks in agreement with QCA, to provide Apprenticeships with recognition for employment and towards progression to higher level education and skills.

### 4.1 The range of Apprenticeships

At 28 February 2005, there were 106 approved Advanced Apprenticeships as listed in Annex 1. However, not all were operational at that date and Annex 2 indicates the numbers of Apprentices leaving Advanced Apprenticeships frameworks in a period of 2003-04, and showing the total at 25810. Of these leavers, about 50 per cent had completed the Apprenticeship by that stage. Total completions for all registered Apprentices over any full period, typically up to three years, is judged by respondents within providers and Sector Skills Councils to rise to almost 50 per cent. Completion rates vary from 100 per cent for Physiological Measurement Technicians (only 8 Apprentices) to single figures in a wide range of other occupational areas. As will be seen later, the number of advance Apprentices progressing to higher education is not known with any degree of reliability.

### 4.2 Components within Apprenticeships

The ancient Apprenticeship combined employment with study and some present-day awarding bodies trace their origins to the provision of recognised qualifications linked to craft, trade and vocational Apprenticeships.<sup>32</sup> The Advanced Apprenticeship has continued to combine these two elements and added further components to prepare young employees for the complex world of work.

It is widely believed that there are three components to the Apprenticeship<sup>33</sup> but in fact there are four. Every Advanced Apprenticeship framework must include:

#### 4.2.1 A national vocational qualification (NVQ) at Level 3

These qualifications are specified in relation to the occupation covered by the Apprenticeship, as defined by National Occupational Standards. They are provided by the awarding body (and therefore approved by the QCA), the relevant Sector Skills Council and the Learning & Skills Council for funding purposes, and delivered through colleges of further education or private training providers. There is no "teaching input"<sup>34</sup> limit set by awarding bodies for NVQs and some may be completed in 150-250 hours if provided on a block release or other concentrated timetable. Generally, NVQ Level 3 is assumed to be achieved over two college years on a part-time basis, taking up to 400 hours. The NVQ is moderated externally as well as being assessed internally.

#### 4.2.2 Technical certificates (TCs)

This element and terminology was introduced in the Cassels Report and applies to a wide range of vocationally-related qualifications and therefore sometimes is referred to as VRQs as well as TCs. Since January 2004, all Apprenticeships must include TCs and every Sector Skills Council has stipulated the TCs approved for its Apprenticeships. Many awarding bodies provide qualifications which are acceptable as TCs for one Advanced Apprenticeship or another. As an interim measure, certain existing qualifications were accepted as proxies for TCs after 2001, but that relaxation has been removed. All TCs must be designed for the purpose of providing technical knowledge and skills related to the occupation in question and not be generic such as the NVQ is designed to be. Therefore, in general a specific NVQ (such as Information Technology or Finance or Customer Services) cannot be included as if they are VRQs although there are specific exception approved by QCA on the basis of material included in the NVQ. Some responses from employers and Sector Skills Councils suggest that this limitation is regarded as unreasonable and may explain some of the animosity towards Apprenticeship frameworks. The glh input to TCs is stipulated by awarding bodies<sup>35</sup> at typically 350-400 hours over two years and only their QCA-accredited qualifications are acceptable within a framework. Employer-designed certificates are generally not acceptable since they are assumed to be represented by their Sector Skills Councils, and able to work through that structure. There are now hundreds of accredited TCs available across the Apprentice and Advanced Apprentice programme and funding is available to resource the provision through colleges and training companies. There is, however, a limit to the funding that can be claimed in respect of an Apprentice engaged on two qualifications simultaneously: the NVQ and the TC/VRQ. TCs are assessed externally.

<sup>31</sup> *Modern Apprenticeships: The Way to Work*. The Report of the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee; Chairman Sir John Cassels, October 2001

<sup>32</sup> Notably City & Guilds, London Chamber of Commerce Examination Board, NCFE, ULCI (now part of CENTRA) and the statuted engineering institutions, among others

<sup>33</sup> *The Progression of Advanced Apprentices into Higher Education*: West London Partnership for Progression (Hale Consulting), July 2004, § 3.4

<sup>34</sup> Defined by LSC in the term "guided learning hours" (glh) which includes more activities that just class contact time with a teacher

<sup>35</sup> There are excellent examples of guidance from a wide range of standards bodies; for example *Modern Apprenticeships in sales and telesales*, Marketing And Sales Standards Setting Body (MSSSB)/London Chamber of Commerce & Industry Examination Board, May 2003

### 4.2.3 Key skills

The key skills in which all Advanced Apprentices must be proficient are:

- Application of Number
- Communication
- Information and Communication Technology
- Improving Own Learning and Performance
- Problem Solving
- Working with Others

There is a range of courses offered by colleges and many training providers which promote and assess these skills to standards set by QCA,<sup>36</sup> at Level 3 in the case of advance Apprenticeships. In principle, certain existing qualifications are acceptable as proxies for formal key skills acquisition through tuition and assessment and this concession has recently been extended.<sup>37</sup> Funding is available for a programme of learning taking typically up to 100 hours for an Apprentice carrying no credit from proxy qualifications. Key skills are assessed externally and internally.

### 4.2.4 Employment Rights & Responsibilities (ERR)

This element is assumed to be provided by the employer, starting with the employee's induction programme and continuing during the first two years of work experience. There is no formal time allocation but Sector Skills Councils have stated that they expect it to account for up to 50 hours. ERR is not assessed but the employer is required to maintain a progress record for each Apprentice and to present this to the Sector Skills Council when application is made for the "award" of the advance Apprenticeship. Non-completion of ERR will result in non-issue of the Apprenticeship certificate just as would failure to complete or satisfy the assessment requirement in NVQ or TC/VRQ. It is worth noting that admissions staff in only three HEIs out of the 43 contacted were aware of this component of the Advanced Apprenticeship.

## 4.3 The development and approval of Apprenticeship frameworks

Since 1995, the process for obtaining approval of Apprenticeships has altered considerably. At the beginning, the onus for policy and action lay upon National Training Organisations (NTOs)<sup>38</sup> – of which there were about 70. Also, there were about 72 Training & Enterprise Councils, which provided advice, guidance and funding for work-based programmes including Apprenticeships. Consequently, Apprenticeship development often occurred in a complex way, with participant organisations debating the content and purposes of the award. Since 2002, the NTOs have been replaced by Sector Skills Councils, currently numbering 21 with a further 4 aspiring to the status.

The process of developing and gaining approval for Apprentices is outlined in guidance from the Learning & Skills Council, through the Apprenticeship Approval Group (AAG)<sup>39</sup>. Membership of the AAG comprises key players in development and standardisation processes and has included:

- Learning & Skills Council
- Qualification & Curriculum Authority
- Department for Education & Skills
- Welsh Assembly Government
- Sector Skills Development Agency
- Representatives of selected Sector Skills Councils
- Adult Learning Inspectorate

It is significant that the AAG includes no specific representative from the higher education sector, although individual members may hold office or appointment in HEIs. Also, active specialist groups and organisations are excluded, such as UVAC and the Mixed Economy Group of Colleges

For Advanced Apprenticeship, the process to be followed by Sector Skills Councils is instructive in the context of the findings of this investigation into the progression to higher education. The sequence of events is intended to be as follows:

1. Applications are to be submitted to a named person at LSC National Office, for consideration by AAG.
2. The application must include:
  - Summary of mandatory outcomes
  - The NVQs to be used for the framework
  - Identification of key skills relevant to the framework
  - A statement of the approach to be taken to ERR
  - Any additional requirements specific to the occupation.<sup>40</sup>
3. The rationale for the framework in terms of the industry, its size, activities and processes, and its structure
4. The employment status of the Apprentice: for, it is assumed that Advanced Apprentices are in full time employment unless there are exceptional circumstances; if not, then the application must be clear how the work experience component would be provided
5. Consultations on development of the framework undertaken with the industry, the sector and providers of input to the framework. Mentioned specifically are meetings with employers, colleges and training companies, and the local LSC
6. The entry requirements in terms of qualifications, attitudes and aptitude.

<sup>36</sup> See [www.qca.org.uk/6507.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/6507.html): *Key Skills and Standards 2004*

<sup>37</sup> From 1 August 2004, the initial three-year relaxation limit is extended to five years. Those who have achieved GCSE A\*-C in English and/or Mathematics within five years prior to starting their Apprenticeships programmes are not expected to complete the corresponding Level 2 key skills qualification(s)

<sup>38</sup> Actually it was the Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) that were replaced by NTOs from 1997, although the process was not completed until 2001

<sup>39</sup> *Guidance on the Completion of the Apprenticeship Framework Template (England and Wales)*: Learning & Skills Council; 2004; in 2002-03, the AAG replaced the earlier approval committee known as MANTRA (Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeship Approvals Group)

<sup>40</sup> For example, anyone working with children would need to be over 18 years and subject to CRB check.; anyone engaged in security or public protection would be subject to other restrictions

7. On- and off-the-job learning arrangements
8. Minimum duration of the training. No time limit is specified but the SSC must convince AAG that the timetable is realistic
9. Health & safety features and requirements of the framework, as appropriate.
10. A sector-related statement on equality and inclusiveness
11. A statement on:
  - Certification: what requirements must be met for an Apprenticeship certificate to be issued
  - Progression: outlining how Advanced Apprentices may proceed to Level 4 qualifications including Foundation Degrees, to employment promotion and to appropriate professional qualifications.

At this final stage, the Guidance says; *“It is important that not only are the consultations with higher education institutions shown, but signposts are given stating where details of courses that Apprenticeship completers can progress to, are to be found. Where Foundation Degrees are being/have been developed please indicate or signpost where the degrees are and what compact arrangements are in place.”*

It is significant that the majority of SSC and HEI respondents to the surveys confirmed that this process of consultation is either just under way or will begin in the near future. Progress appears to have been made in a number of funded programme areas including engineering, hospitality & catering, business & management, and in care, health & related services. For these frameworks, HE progression routes are said to be in place. Even so, progression of Advanced Apprentices to Foundation Degrees, for example, has been slow to develop and accounts for very few entrants. One of the most advanced college-HEI compacts in the country has yet to enrol a single Advanced Apprentice onto a Foundation Degree, Honours Degree or HND. Possible reasons are spelt out in Chapter 9. Structural and communication explanations were offered by a number of respondents:

- *“...I don’t know who’s supposed to be in charge of HE development...we [SSC] simply don’t have the contacts...we’re still waiting for the university to come back to us...nearly a year now...”*
- *“...HEIs don’t seem to be engaged in this process at all...we invite them but they just don’t come along...”*
- *“...hardly any take-up of HE because Apprentices don’t know what’s available...colleges should tell them more...”*
- *“...employers don’t get involved with us [university]...they want employees, not students...”*

All Advanced Apprenticeship frameworks are required to have HE progression routes and criteria in place, but they are thought to exist in principle only and not in practice. Very few Apprentices seem to take the opportunity to progress immediately to higher education in any form but even this statement is dogged by a shortage of data and disagreement about the validity of the progression on offer. One particular response encapsulates a wide range of opinions held by SSCs and HEIs:

*“...this is going to take much longer...Apprentices have often given up on study ... they want to work and improve their skills...the HE message is not being heard at the moment...give it five years...”*

## 5. Potential and actual destinations for Apprentices

From the earliest days of the ancient Apprenticeship, employment was the expected outcome. For many years in the 19th and 20th centuries, Apprenticeship incorporated part-time attendance at a place of training, and qualifications became an integral component of completed indentures. The purposes of the Modern Apprenticeship, as introduced in 1995, have always included the same process but now extend to higher level qualifications. For the foundation level of Apprenticeship, the qualification progression is assumed to include the next higher level of national vocational qualifications and a wide range of other vocationally-related qualifications. For the Advanced Apprentice, as outlined in Chapter 3, the assumption (and gradually developing practice) is that successful completers will have the opportunity to progress to level 4 qualifications. The actual picture for this progression is described in Chapter 7. It is worth stating at this stage the presumptive destinations for successful Advanced Apprentices.

### 5.1 Employment

The impetus for the development of the Modern Apprenticeship programme arises from the shortage of suitably skilled young people entering the job market. The Cassels Report<sup>41</sup> makes the case for high quality employment and the engagement of employers in the Apprenticeship delivery process. The report commented ruefully in 2001:

*3.9 ...Only around half young people entering Apprenticeship complete it, even in the limited sense of gaining the NVQ associated with it. The latest data shows attainment rates of 49% for advanced Modern Apprenticeships and 41% for the more recent foundation stream. We have been told that considerably fewer complete the full current model, including the required key skills, though no figures are kept on full completions.*

The same statistics apply in 2004-05, more or less. It is as if the Apprenticeship prepares young people for suitable employment, whether or not they complete the framework. As will be seen in Chapter 6, the achievement of NVQ Level 3 is judged by many employers and Apprentices themselves as the main outcome of the learning programme. Annex 2 shows the number of Advanced Apprentices completing frameworks in 2003-04, over the range of frameworks available.

Apprenticeship is about employment and always has been. It is a requirement that all Apprentices should be in employment for the duration of the framework. Therefore, employment as an outcome must continue to be the main criterion for judging the quality of an Apprenticeship framework, its relevance to the industry represented by the Sector Skills Council, and the standards being set in teaching and learning by providers of the supporting curriculum. One difficulty

faced by colleges and other learning providers arises from the fact that non-completion of an Apprenticeship programme is accounted as a "failure to achieve", even if elements of the framework are completed.

### 5.2 Continued further education

There is a myriad of qualification available to learners and employees in every conceivable occupation. There are good reasons why such continued study should be attractive, for example:

- More specialised Level 3 qualifications may be available, that are directly relevant to employment.
- The employer may not be willing to sponsor the successful Apprentice to higher level education on the basis that the Apprentice should obtain experience in employment; but will sponsor more learning at the same level.
- The Apprentice decides for him/her self that work experience would be more valuable at that time and undertakes continuing further education as a means to maintaining contact with the world of learning.
- There are no apparently relevant higher level qualifications available in the Apprentice's employment sector or sub-sector.

Whatever the reason, the Learning & Skills Council and other agencies regard continued learning as a successful outcome but less successful than would be progression to the next level of qualification.

### 5.3 Higher education

The definition of higher education varies depending upon the speaker. It is important to distinguish the various interpretations of the term and to relate them to the findings of this investigation.

#### 5.3.1 Levels 4 and 5 vocational qualifications

These include the BTEC Higher awards, the NVQ Level 4, and various Level 4 Certificates of specialised awarding bodies which are accredited by QCA. There are now some hundreds of such qualifications available, provided by all the major awarding bodies<sup>42</sup> and many smaller "professional" organisations also. Evidence from respondents indicates that these qualifications are prized highly for the progression of successful Advanced Apprentices, all available on a part-time basis and all the more attractive as a consequence. Level 5 vocational qualifications are regarded in some circles as a novelty<sup>43</sup> but have been developed by many organisations to fill a special need in an occupational or "professional" niche. Some universities offer non-degree Level 5 certificates and diplomas within the national qualification framework, linked to their commercial training and profession updating activities.

<sup>41</sup> *Modern Apprenticeships: The Way to Work*, op cit.

<sup>42</sup> For example, City & Guilds provides a new suite of Higher Level Qualifications (HLQ) at levels 3-5 in a wide range of occupations, in addition to NVQ Levels 4 and 5. Similarly, Edexcel provides Higher National awards in 21 different occupations, all defined at Level 4

<sup>43</sup> For example, the Edexcel Level 5 Diploma in Management and the CMI Level 5 Executive Diploma in Management. It is noticeable that most Level 5 qualifications are developing in management and business communication

### 5.3.2 Foundation Degrees

These are available in full-time, part-time and mixed modes of delivery. In principle, Foundation Degrees will be developed to allow any programme of learning to be accommodated within employment or as an alternative to employment for rapid progress to qualification. They are well described in many sources<sup>44</sup> and are presumed to represent a major progression opportunity for successful Advanced Apprentices, as described in Chapter 3.

### 5.3.3 Honours Degrees

One of the unexpected findings from this investigation has been the progression by holders of Level 3 vocational awards onto a range of Honours Degree courses, when Foundation Degrees have been developed specifically for the vocational programme in question. Such progression is not a mass movement but sufficient to suggest that the Advanced Apprenticeship is not understood, whereas NVQs and BTEC National awards are coming to be. One of our respondent universities stated by telephone,

*"We're happy to consider NVQ3 for admission to our Honours programme but we don't offer Foundation Degrees and I don't think we could take them onto such a course, anyway."*

Whatever the reason, or the comparative advisability of the route, this progression seems as accessible as any other in certain programmes, particularly business studies, computing, construction and health & social care.

### 5.3.4 Professional and trade qualifications

There is a wide range of qualifications applicable to various trades and crafts, for which Advanced Apprentices may (and do) make application. Frequently, such qualifications demand previous success within the national framework to Level 3 or 4 and often also work experience for some years. Examples cited by respondents include membership of the Chartered Institute of Builders, of the Institute of Chartered Surveyors, Institute of Legal Executives, Association of Accounting Technicians, Dental Technology & Hygiene<sup>45</sup>, animal welfare<sup>46</sup> and so on.

### 5.3.3 Non accredited learning

Since 2002, LSDA and NIACE have investigated means of recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning.<sup>47</sup> This is defined as learning which need not be conducted in a formal teaching-learning setting nor leading to a recognised qualification. The magnitude of this provision may be measured by the sums spent on it by individuals, by local authorities through their adult education centres and by LSC itself through its Adult & Community Learning budget. There is evidence that successful Advanced Apprentices sometimes engage with non-accredited learning and examples mentioned by respondents include scout camp volunteering, welding and artistic fabrication, flower arranging, website design and modern foreign languages. It is difficult to assess the importance of this outlet for

successful Advanced Apprentices, nor the value of the Apprenticeship as a motivator or introduction to learning for individuals who may otherwise have decided not to engage in skills development. This area of investigation needs further study.

## 5.4 Conclusions

The Advanced Apprenticeship programme prepares successful learners for a wide range of later study, qualification and skill development. That fact may be regarded as one of the strengths of the Apprenticeship frameworks.

However, there is no apparent direct link between successful completion of an Advanced Apprenticeship and progression to Foundation Degree, for example, which seems to have policy backing and is an official intention. More likely in the findings of this investigation is progression to BTEC Higher awards and to a wide range of trade and professional qualifications. The NVQ Level 4 appears to be as likely an outcome as Foundation Degree, as does admission to an Honours Degree.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, one of the reasons for this unpredictability of progression route lies in the complex structure of the Advanced Apprenticeship. Many organisations, especially HEIs, require more guidance and explanation if they are to promote the Foundation Degree progression route in future.

<sup>44</sup> For example on the specialist website: [www.foundationdegree.org.uk/courses/listinst/](http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/courses/listinst/)

<sup>45</sup> In this instance via BTEC National level after completion of the Advanced Apprenticeship; see 5.2 above

<sup>46</sup> Via the City & Guilds Pet Store Management Certificate, Level 3

<sup>47</sup> RARPA (Recognising And Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning), summary and reports, NIACE, March 2004

## 6. Findings from the surveys

### 6.1 Policies on Apprentices' progression to higher education

There has been an assumption since 2000 that Modern Apprenticeships would provide a useful learner-base for the Foundation Degree and for other Level 4 vocational qualifications such as Higher National Diploma.<sup>48</sup> That assumption arose from the stated intention from the then Secretary of State at DfES that colleges of further education would be important delivery vehicles for such qualifications<sup>49</sup>:

*"For many young people, entry to Foundation Degrees will take place after successful completion of Modern Apprenticeships..."*

*"...expect the new degrees to be offered in both "old" and "new" universities, often in partnership with high-quality further education colleges..."*

*However, the 1992 universities and other HEIs always had provided sub-degree programmes and those institutions were accorded the role of validators of the Foundation Degree. As a result, Foundation Degrees are offered within almost all universities and other HEIs as well as via colleges of further education. The latter arrangement is undertaken typically by franchising, or via a validation agreement if the college is funded directly from HEFCE.*

The link between Foundation Degree and Apprenticeships is still being considered by HEFCE<sup>50</sup> as part of its progression strategy via Lifelong Learning Networks.

*...target learners may be Apprentices in some form of work-based learning in engineering or construction. They will need access to appropriate HNC/D or Foundation Degrees, and progression opportunities in the longer term across a range of continuing professional development (CPD) and other HE provision including Honours Degrees... (para 6)*

*... strongest theme to emerge is provision for 'work-based learners', often defined as 'Apprentices', and with Foundation Degrees as the appropriate progression route. Apprentices and Foundation Degrees are obviously an important element in progression. But they are not the only one... (para 17)*

What is most apparent in this distribution of provision is the diversity of arrangements that exist for learners progressing from Apprenticeships (Level 3) to HE. Returns to the survey indicate a complete misunderstanding of the Apprenticeship on the part of some long-established HEIs as the following quotations show:

*"We accept NVQ3 and BTEC National Awards, but would not admit the holder of an Apprenticeship."*

*"We do not offer any programmes relevant to Apprentices." (An HEI offering engineering, health & care, business management and computer studies.)*

*"It is not our policy to admit Apprentices or NVQ holders." (An HEI with a long tradition of access-provision in health & care.)*

*"We do not believe that Apprentices are ready for study at degree level." (When prompted, the respondent stated that the institution had no experience of Apprentices but that an assumption had been made by senior administrators about the components and level of the Apprenticeship programme.)*

*"There are so few. We take them one at a time as special cases. We don't have any rules or procedures to cover them." (A 1960s university that advertises its acceptance of BTEC National and C&G Level 3 certificates.)*

Conversely, MEG colleges and many 1992 universities have in place clear progression routes for Apprentices, and make no distinction between their admission and other qualifications. Even so, barriers to progression seem to exist in the most liberal and specially organised institutions, so that Apprentices sometimes are expected to undertake additional study. The following quotations, from both written surveys and subsequent telephone calls, indicate the range of attitudes and policies:

*"No barriers. Apprentices just move onto the Foundation Degree or HND and we see no problems."*

*"We provide study skills modules so that they can get into HE ways of working very quickly. It works well."*

*"It depends on their technical certificates. Some are not such good preparations for advanced work and we have to make up the deficit."*

*"I don't think the Apprenticeship provides mature study skills and that's disappointing. Even some of our own Apprentices can't make the transition to HE and they drop out."*

*"We like to admit Apprentices as part of our access policy but we don't make special provisions. If Apprentices join our HE Centre, they are expected to work at HE levels. End of story."*

This diversity of approaches to the admission of Apprentices seems to arise from four main causes:

- Uncertainty and differences, perceived or real, over the nature and standard of the Advanced Apprenticeship, including its component qualifications
- The fact that it is not a qualification in its own right and there has been no mechanism to record HE entrants possessing the Advanced Apprenticeship

<sup>48</sup> Cassels Report: op cit., p.6, where the Apprenticeship is described as a "minor route" to HE study

<sup>49</sup> David Blunkett; Greenwich; 15 February 2000

<sup>50</sup> HEFCE; *Lifelong Learning Networks: progress report and next steps*, January 2005

- The small numbers of Advanced Apprentices who apply for HE entry, leading to the assumption in many HEIs that it cannot be regarded as a “standard” avenue for progression
- HEIs are not involved in the design process or consulted on fitness for purpose for HE entry.

Connexions, the careers and advice service, is also confused on occasion. The question was posed, “What do you advise for an 18-year old coming to the end of an Advanced Apprenticeship, who wishes to go to university?”

Replies included:

*“Go ahead and make an application. Don’t mention your Advanced Modern Apprenticeship. Just say that you’ve got the CACHE certificate (the technical certificate in this case) or else they’ll not understand.” (This to an enquiry in childcare. London.)*

*“The Apprenticeship isn’t really meant for university degrees, you know. You’d do better to consider HND.” (An enquiry in business studies. Eastern Region.)*

*“The Foundation Degree is perfect for you. Tell them all about your Apprenticeship and they’ll want to see you, I’m sure” (An enquiry in engineering. North West region.)*

David Blunkett’s stated intention on progression from Advanced Apprenticeship to Foundation Degree, and other higher qualifications, was applauded in 2000. There is evidence that it is dogged by uncertainty and confusion among the very institutions and individuals that make policy on such progression and offer advice to would-be entrants. This is supported by UVAC 2005.<sup>51</sup>

## 6.2 Apprenticeship as an item in learner records

The Advanced Apprenticeship is not a qualification. It is a framework of qualifications and experience and, as such, there has been no mechanism for recording it within the qualification capture system of the various agencies that keep track of student progression. Necessarily, colleges of further education that provide teaching and learning within the Advanced Apprenticeship will keep their own learner records but generally those data are “lost” when Apprentices progress to HE since there is no unique learner identifier.

Survey findings on this matter are confusing and seem to indicate a raised awareness of the importance of the issue, but not how it may be addressed. Table 6.1 gives the responses from the two surveys of institutions (Survey A):

**Table 6.1**

Question	Type of Institution	No for Apprentices	Yes for Apprentices	No for NVQs	Yes for NVQs
Did your institution specifically record the total number of former Apprentices and NVQ Level 3 learners entering your undergraduate programmes in 2003-04 and/or 2004-05?	HEI	91%	9%	66%	33%
	College of FE	0%	100%	0%	100%

However, a second survey (Survey B) was addressed by telephone to 45 HEIs with a simplified question and the initial results are shown in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2**

Question	HEIs answering No	HEIs answering Yes
Do you keep data on vocational qualifications held by your entrants, including Advanced Apprenticeships?	22%	68%

There is clearly some confusion over what data actually are held within HEIs and what they mean in the context of the Advanced Apprenticeship framework. The HESA data return requirement has not distinguished between NVQs, the various technical certificates used by Advanced Apprentices, and their equivalence with A-levels, as indicated in 6.3 below. Supplementary questions were asked in Survey A, to investigate why institutions did not keep records of Apprentices entering HE, with the following results:

**Table 6.3**

Question: for what reasons are these records NOT kept?	
1 Admission decisions are devolved to individual tutors or departments	8.5%
2 No requirement to keep them	30.4%
3 Do not believe it would affect institutional policy on admissions to know these numbers	21.3%
4 Would require too complex a change to our recording system (e.g. software limitations)	5.4%
5 Not our policy to admit Apprentices or Level 3 NVQ holders	8.1%
6 Other reasons. (see below)	26.3%
Total responses (actual replies exceeded number of respondents because of multiple options)	100.00%

<sup>51</sup> Pauline Hughes (UVAC), op cit.

The “other reasons” and comments offered by respondents included the following:

- *“We treat them as special cases such as mature students or APEL and record them like that.”*
- *“We receive very few applications from NVQ/Apprentices and they usually apply with a higher qualification which is recorded instead”*
- *“NVQ Level 3 are grouped with A-level entrants under one code. NVQ Levels 4 & 5 are collected under specific codes.”*
- *“We are not aware of any applications from Apprentices because they quote NVQs or BTECs or VCE.”*
- *“Apprentices and NVQ Level 3 would come under several possibilities: level 3 qualifications; mature students; professional qualifications.”*

Such responses indicate the potential for confusion among HEI admissions staff and their data management colleagues, arising from the complex nature of Apprenticeships and lack of knowledge in the sector. However, the strict requirements placed upon institutions by HESA are not conducive to information gathering or management and there is evidence that institutions satisfy the minimum requirements for funding purposes. This is the sense of responses to option 2 in Table 6.3 and is the largest of the returns made by institutions.

It appears that the HE funding methodology has affected the way that FE institutions also maintain their learner records. All FE colleges maintain the individualised learner record (ILR) for LSC funding (and other) purposes but their returns to HESA need be only as detailed as any HEI’s. From a sample of MEG colleges, it is clear that at least some return the same minimal data to HESA, and do not maintain a central record for learners once they are registered on HE programmes. Significantly lacking are data on the Apprenticeship frameworks followed by those HE entrants and it has proved impossible to relate HE experience to particular sector frameworks.

### 6.3 The management of learner data

The surprising responses in Table 6.2 required probing and a sample of telephone enquiries provided an explanation. Until 2003-04, HESA has grouped Level 3 equivalent qualifications into one returns code, to record the Highest Qualification on Entry. In the latest returns 2004-05, institutions must distinguish between the following, all of which could be appropriate within an Advanced Apprenticeship:

HESA Code	Description
39	‘A’ level equivalent qualification not elsewhere specified
40	Any combinations of GCE ‘A’/SCE ‘Higher’ and GNVQ/GSVQ or NVQ/SVQ at level 3
41	ONC or OND (including BTEC and SCOTVEC equivalents)
43	Foundation course at FE level
94	Advanced Modern Apprenticeships

The anomaly in the latest HESA return is the listing of a non-qualification, the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship.<sup>52</sup> By definition, any entrant holding such a completed Apprenticeship must also hold NVQ at level 3 and it is the responsibility of the institution to distinguish the highest qualification on entry. However, institutions are only as informed in this respect as applicants allow them to be, and there is evidence that completion of the Advanced Apprenticeship is sometimes not disclosed.

A sample of individual Apprenticeship-HEI students was interviewed, with the following quotations being typical after detailed questioning:

*“I’ve got A-levels in English Lit and Geography so I gave them as my highest qualifications and I didn’t tell them about the Apprenticeship.”*

*“The admissions person didn’t seem to know about advanced Modern Apprenticeship so we wrote down my NVQ3 in business studies.”*

*“We talked about my BTEC National and the NVQ I got in 2003, and we decided to put the BTEC down as my highest qualification.”*

*“She decided that my certificates were A-level equivalent and she put me down as that. I don’t think she mentioned the Apprenticeship at all on the form.”*

*“They said that the Apprenticeship was very important for me to get the place but there was nowhere on the form to write it in, so I didn’t.”*

Consequently, for all admission to HE before September 2004, national data on Apprentices is almost entirely absent.

Recently, the Learning & Skills Development Agency (LSDA) on behalf of the LSC has researched the progression of vocational award holders into HE<sup>53</sup> and concluded that there are deficiencies in educational data as well as serious barriers to entry and to progress for holders of vocational qualifications. Their finding is that only about 2 per cent of completed Apprenticeships progressed to HE in 2002-03.<sup>54</sup> This is supported by various other findings.<sup>55</sup> However, the non-reporting of Apprenticeships to HESA, and the paucity of destinations data from FE colleges, combine to suggest that this figure is more likely to be an underestimate than an exaggeration. It will take some years for the HESA qualification code to produce a reliable base of data, to judge whether a higher proportion of Advanced Apprentices progress to HE than apparently is the case at the moment.

<sup>52</sup> Although the official title of these frameworks is now Advanced Apprenticeships, the older name is still in use and has only recently become understood by many agencies and institutions

<sup>53</sup> Connor H & Little B (2005[1]) *Vocational Ladders or Crazy Paving: making your way to higher levels*, LSDA

<sup>54</sup> bid., Table 2.4 Advanced Modern Apprenticeship (AMA) enrolments by learning outcome and destination in England in 2002/03

<sup>55</sup> For example, Hodgson A and Spours K (2000) *Expanding higher education in the UK: from ‘system slowdown’ to ‘system acceleration’*. Higher Education Quarterly, 53(4), 295–322

## 6.4 The search for better data and stronger links

As part of this investigation, the following data scrutinies have been discussed and agreed as useful in the next phase of policy analysis, pending the arrival of a unique learner identifier:

**6.4.1** Matching technical certificates (vocationally-related qualifications) to learners known to be engaged in Key Skills development, and so to identify Advanced Apprentices from the awarding body database. Thereby, individuals may be identified as they register with HEIs and are recorded by HESA. Work is in progress within City & Guilds but expected to be undertaken for a specific programme area and likely to a lengthy study.

**6.4.2** "Fuzzy" matching of individuals who transition from the ILR to HESA. This was the basis of the work undertaken for the LSDA report (2005), and was commissioned specially from HESA. The multi-agency group Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) engages LSC, HEFCE (and so HESA), UCAS, DfES and the Student Loans Company meet in principle to discuss need for and availability of learner data. Currently, there is no intention to create a search process to identify individuals or groups progressing from one level of education and training to another, but the capability exists to do so if resources were allocated to the task.

**6.4.3** A new set of activities for the Joint Progression Strategy Group which includes DfES, HEFCE and LSC. Recently, the Group has set itself specifically the target to "...improve progression from the Apprenticeship route from Level 3 to Level 4...it will be important that sectors that have a tradition of using HNCs/HNDs have confidence that FD can meet their needs."<sup>56</sup> The implication of this target is that Foundation Degrees will be promoted over Higher National Diploma and Certificates, and that raises another set of issues for awarding bodies and those agencies engaged in credit-rating and tariffs for vocational qualifications.

**6.4.4** A whole-sample approach to identifying progression of Apprentices within specific frameworks (such as engineering, construction and hospitality), and so to track their progress within the Sector Skills Councils' database and onto HESA records. This suggestion has been considered by DfES Moorfoot and discussions have been progressed on a sampling frame, but the time scale is believed to be too lengthy to aid this investigation.

## 6.5 Barriers facing Apprentices applying for higher education admission

The first of two surveys of institutions probed the existence of barriers to entry to HE and then to effective study whilst engaged in learning. The majority of institutions said that there are no barriers to entry, as in Table 6.5.

**Table 6.5**

Question	Yes	No
Are there admissions barriers faced by Apprentices at your institution?	31%	69%

A range of alternative reasons was provided for respondents and the following were received from the YES replies:

- *Lack of knowledge of Apprenticeships among admissions staff*
- *Lack of knowledge of Apprenticeships among academic staff*
- *We don't have the right programmes for them*
- *They are not ready for HE ways of learning*<sup>57</sup>
- *They are deficient in essential knowledge*
- *We are uncertain about the standard of the Apprenticeship.*

Institutions making these responses currently offer Foundation Degrees in:

- International Studies
- Science and Science Education
- Teaching and Learning Support
- Computing
- Network Systems
- E-skills for Business
- Civil Engineering Construction
- Construction (with many pathways)
- Public Sector Studies
- Working with Young People and Young People's Services
- Care and Guidance.

It is clear that Advanced Apprentices could experience difficulty in making application for entry to these programmes, not necessarily because the Apprenticeship is deficient in an essential feature of skills of knowledge, but owing to the perceptions or lack of knowledge of the enrolling institution.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *From Work-based Learning To Higher Education: a dialogue between practice and policy*, DfES Conference 25 May 2004, Birmingham; (Appendix 2; S Geary, DfES)

<sup>57</sup> This response was given by a number of MEG colleges, which provide Apprenticeship prior to progression to higher awards, as well as some HEIs

<sup>58</sup> One 1992 university offers the following in its FAQs for applicants, with no mention of Apprenticeships:

Q. What qualifications do you need to study for an HNC, HND or Foundation Degree?

A. There are no formal entry requirements but if you have any of the following you are likely to be at the right academic level:

- At least one A Level
- An Advanced GNVQ or Vocational A Level
- A BTEC National (*note: a very common technical certificate provided within Advanced Apprenticeship*)
- An NVQ Level 3 (*note: a requirement of all Advanced Apprenticeship*)
- Relevant work experience.

**Table 6.6**

Who in your organisation is responsible for assessing and advising on admission of Apprentices and vocational learners into higher education?	Responses <sup>59</sup>	Are there barriers to entry?	
		Yes	No
Institution's central admission service or office	46%	8%	38%
Normal admissions tutors	23%	4%	21%
Individual members of teaching or training staff	11%	2%	10%
Committee with members from local "feeder" organisations	5%	5%	nil
Others. Please state			
• We don't have relevant programmes (i.e. no process in place)	7%	6%	nil
• Non-standard: access, APL and other processes	9%	6%	

Of particular concern are the perceptions (and even more significant if facts) that Advanced Apprentices are "...not ready for HE ways of learning..." and "...deficient in essential knowledge..." The NVQ Level 3 is stated officially to be equivalent in standard and effort to 2 A-levels. In addition, Advanced Apprentices all possess a technical certificate at Level 3, closely related to the demand of the relevant vocational programme and quality assured by the triumvirate of the Sector Skills Council, the recognised awarding bodies and the QCA.

The fact is that almost all universities and other HEIs, in principle, will accept NVQ Level 3 and a BTEC National award as valid entry qualifications for Foundation Degrees and for HND/HNC if offered by themselves or their affiliated colleges. For some reason, Advanced Apprenticeships appear to be viewed as of a lower standard although typically they include both these types of qualification and much more beside. The most obvious explanation is that HEIs, including 1992 institutions, are unaware of the composition of Advanced Apprenticeships and the standards that are set for successful Apprentices. Two particular quotations exemplify this uncertainty:

**(a)** *"Currently, Apprentices or NVQ3 holders would have to enter our foundation year. [i.e. before starting on the degree programme proper]. We are happy to admit such students but as we don't offer highly vocational degrees, we don't get requests for admission."*

In fact, this HEI offers first degrees in Environmental Science, Business Administration, Computer Science and Information Systems, Finance, Human Resource Management, Music Technology, Nursing and so on. It is clear that either the standard of NVQ Level 3 is inadequate for admission at this institution or that the Apprenticeship framework is misunderstood.

**(b)** *"Dealt with by our unit for non-standard, APL, APEL entrants."*

In fact, this HEI will admit to HND, HNC, Foundation Degree and many Honours programmes on the basis of BTEC National awards, GNVO, NVQ Level 3 and other Level 3 certificates of recognised awarding bodies. The perception seems to be that an Advanced Apprenticeship is different and of lower standard than its component qualifications.

A further source of difficulty facing Advanced Apprentices in their applications to HEIs may arise from the internal process of making offers. Table 6.6 shows the relationship between the offer process and the availability of places.

An overall assessment of these findings leads to Table 6.7 and indicates the relationship between uncertainty over Advanced Apprenticeship admissions and the "normality" of the admissions process. Institutions that apply non-standard processes appear to create barriers to admission, apparently arising from uncertainty and ignorance of Apprenticeship frameworks. In Table 6.7, the first three admissions responses are classified as Standard and the others as Non-standard.

**Table 6.7**

Nature of admission process		Barriers believed to exist	No barriers believed to exist
		Standard processes	14%
Non-standard processes		17%	nil

These data go some way to confirm the views of Connor & Little<sup>60</sup>: "...it is unclear whether NVQ Level 3 achievements provide a suitable base from which to progress to higher education..." (§ 4.6) and "...while information on vocational qualifications was available, few admissions tutors...felt confident in their knowledge of these qualifications..." (§4.7 and quoting findings of the Schwarz Report).<sup>61</sup>

The central problem is one of lack of familiarity with the Advanced Apprenticeship framework structure, the standard of its component qualifications and the readiness of learners to make the transition to higher education. These findings are reinforced by recent work undertaken on behalf of 12 HEIs, to investigate knowledge and attitudes towards Advanced Apprentices applying for university places.<sup>62</sup> Of particular significance are opinions such as:

*"...AA designed to meet employer needs – now they're being shoe-horned into HE..."*

<sup>59</sup> Percentages standardised on basis of total number of replies in all categories

<sup>60</sup> Op cit., LSDA 2005[1]

<sup>61</sup> Schwarz S (2004) *Consultation on key issues relating to fair admissions to higher education*, DfES

<sup>62</sup> UVAC 2005[2]; *Draft admissions service report* by P Hughes

...NVQs of variable quality – each has to be evaluated on own merit – some OK as pre-requisite into HE e.g. engineering but others e.g. business management would be unsuitable for many of the HE courses as they are too general...

... If it were part of the UCAS system it would be accepted overnight...

(we need) ... A simple and clear reference document which:

- specifies what each component is
- what students have to do to achieve this
- how they are assessed

...Should appear in the UCAS qualifications guide and maybe the NARIC guide..."

## 6.8 Special provision for Apprentices progressing to higher education

Among respondents, there was a widespread recognition that Advanced Apprentice entrants may or would require special consideration in their learning activities or in pastoral care. Table 6.8 shows that nearly half of respondent institutions (45 per cent) make special provision to ease Apprentices into HE and this may be interpreted in two ways:

- (i) it may explain why so many institutions claim that there are no barriers to entry: help is available for Apprentice entrants
- (ii) the perception in institutions, mainly in MEG colleges, that Apprentice entrants do face barriers but that they will make the effort to facilitate Apprentices' progression.

**Table 6.8**

		Do you make special provisions for Apprentices progressing to your HE programmes?	
		Yes	No
Are there barriers faced by Apprentices at your institution?	Yes	14%	17%
	No	31%	38%

However, the majority of respondent institutions (55 per cent: 17% + 38%) say that no special provision is made although almost one-third (17% out of 55%) of these respondents acknowledge that barriers exist.

Very few respondents were willing to provide examples of the special provision made for Apprentice entrants and further investigation is required to explore this feature of their HE progression experience. Examples cited by respondents to these surveys include:

- We have changed our curriculum to help them
- We give explicit credit for work experience
- We make allowances for different learning styles
- We provide extra tuition in programme materials
- We provide extra guidance on learning-skills
- We provide extra pastoral or tutorial support
- We have support for all who come through "non-traditional" access routes.<sup>63</sup>

Other research and editorial work is available from Farmer 2004<sup>64</sup>, Anderson and Hemsworth 2005<sup>65</sup> and from various seminars linked to Aimhigher.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Which comment reinforces the perception that NVQ3 and Level 3 Technical Certificates are non-standard when combined in an Apprenticeship

<sup>64</sup> Farmer J (2004) *Progression to higher education from work related learning, work-based learning and community based learning*, Aimhigher West

<sup>65</sup> Anderson A and Hemsworth D (2005); *From Apprenticeship to Higher Education. A guide to developing work-based progression routes to higher education for Advanced Apprentices and other skilled staff and managers*, UVAC

<sup>66</sup> Example: Annual Conference: Aimhigher London South, 2 March 2005

## 7. Data sets available and used in this investigation

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Six main sources of data have been employed during this investigation:

### 7.1 The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) of LSC

This massive database replaced the Individualised Student Record (ISR) used by the former Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in 2001. It contains data on every learner enrolled on any programme funded by LSC and, in principle, it includes:

- Personal and contact details
- Former educational and training attainment
- Receipt of educational financial support, such as the educational maintenance allowance
- Current programme of study or training
- Progress and achievement at various stages of study or training.
- Final qualification(s) achieved
- Destination after leaving the provider making the return to ILR.

It is clear that the final two sections of ILR would be invaluable in conducting this investigation. However, Advanced Apprenticeships are not qualifications and destinations data is notoriously unreliable. The first of these problems is overcome partly by another database as below. The second remains an outstanding difficulty for all providers and official agencies, since it is incumbent on learners to provide such information and many (it is said most) cannot do so at the moment of departure from the college or other provider. Typically, this final contact occurs in July-August each year but many (most?) departing learners do not know at that time the activities in which they will be engaged in six months time, say.

### 7.2 The Apprenticeships database of LSC

This is a different database from ILR; it is not a sub-set. It contains very detailed numerical information on the number of Apprentices, at all levels, engaged in which frameworks, and their progress towards completion. In principle, it should provide information on the numbers of Apprentices completing their frameworks and their readiness for more advance study and/or training. In fact, it is not used currently for that purpose and has very little data on destinations. It is the main source of policy target assessment and indicates, for example, the proportions and numbers of Apprentices progressing through frameworks towards completion. It shows, for example, that completion rates vary from 10 per cent in some frameworks to almost 100 per cent in others. It should be a prime source of information but also for asking important questions about the employment value of some frameworks, the standards being set, the burden of work placed upon Apprentices, and the validity of the Advanced Apprenticeship as a preparation for higher level study. Later investigators will find this database a fruitful source for such questions.

### 7.3 HESA records

These records are maintained on behalf of the DfES, as a source of data for institutional funding via HEFCE, and are based on an obligatory return from institutions. In essence, they contain numerical information on the qualifications of students entering higher education, their course of study, their progress over the duration of a course, and achievement rates. They are aligned with the UCAS entry record, particularly as regards entry requirements and their satisfaction by candidates for entry to institutions.

Other investigators have been able to commission HESA to run special analyses, to assess the performance of sub-populations of students against their entry qualifications, educational backgrounds and so on. This can be a lengthy process and was not employed in this investigation, partly because of the pressure of time. The most obvious reason why these records were not explored in depth arises from their lack of detail as regards vocational qualifications and Apprenticeships in particular. All Level 3 vocational qualifications have been recorded as "A-level equivalent", and there has been no opportunity to distinguish between the various types of vocational qualification as they seem to reflect student preparedness for higher education. The lack of Apprenticeship data is even more significant and is widely regretted. Consequently, from September 2004, all institutions are required to log and return the number of Apprentices registering for admission and continuation on programmes of higher education but these data were not available at the time of this investigation. There is still some dispute in HEIs as to the validity of the HESA demand for such data, on two grounds. First Apprenticeships are not qualifications and institutions make admission decision on qualifications. Secondly, applicants to higher education are known to record on their UCAS forms the component qualifications within the Apprenticeship but not always the Apprenticeship itself. The question arises whether or not an institution is remiss in not knowing about the Apprenticeship if the applicant does not enter it in the first instance. Anyway, for the purpose of this investigation, the HESA database proved interesting for its contents and also for its lack of detail, but was not immediately useful for analysis purposes, although HESA staff were obliging and helpful in every other way.

### 7.4 The LSC-UCAS-HESA-HEFCE data stream

Now that the boundary between further and higher education has become so permeable, data requirements and availabilities have required the various agencies to work together in their information management. A number of meetings and/or conversations were held with individuals and groups in LSC, HESA, HEFCE and UCAS to explore the availability of data useful to this investigation. Thanks are due to every such person and group, for their openness on data discussions and frankness concerning shortcomings in data they have held in some cases for many years.

In principle, the process of data generation is as follows:

- Any learner leaving a maintained school sixth form, a college of further education, a sixth form college, or an adult education centre will be recorded as departing from ILR
- All applicants for places in maintained institutions of higher education or higher level courses in colleges of further education will be recorded by UCAS or the equivalent body if for specialised courses in art and design. Therefore, every learner recorded in ILR can be traced if an application is made via UCAS, including details of previous qualifications and, particularly, registration as an Advanced Apprentice.
- At a later date, all successful applicants to higher education are classified by their institutions and a return made to HESA, to form the Student Record. This is an individualised student record although even more detailed data must be available in the background, so to speak. HESA records should enable tracing of individual learners to funded courses of study. As above, the fact that HESA has not recorded Apprenticeships has hampered the data search for progression activity.

### 7.5 Awarding bodies' databases

Every learner in the UK who enrolls on a course of study or training leading to a recognised qualification, must be registered with an awarding body. The details for each registration include:

- Personal and contact details via the institution (known as a Centre)
- Previous qualifications to establish that pre-requirements have been satisfied
- Details of the current programme being studied and the qualification sought
- Centre details for the return of learner performance and assessment information.

Over recent years, awarding bodies have attempted to collect or synthesize destination data for their award-holders. This would be useful marketing information as well as providing support for government policies on achievement rates, progression and employment opportunities. Such destination data has not been collected uniformly across the awarding sector and is not reliable within any one awarding body.

Every advance Apprentice must complete a relevant NVQ Level 3 qualification. In principle, therefore, an awarding body knows every Apprentice but that is not the case. Awarding bodies register learners onto courses of study and training for qualifications, without reference to their framework registration through the Sector Skills Councils. Consequently, awarding body databases cannot distinguish Apprentices. They were not able, in the time available, to construct search routines to match learners on their databases with the same individuals registered with SSCs, although such a match should be possible.

One awarding body, City & Guilds, is exploring a surrogate statistic for Apprentices on the basis that they all register for Key Skills alongside the NVQ Level 3. Any such joint registration is highly likely to match to an Advanced Apprentice. In the time available, it was not possible to see this exercise to its conclusion and, anyway, data from one awarding body would not have provided answers to questions affecting the entire awarding sector.

### 7.6 Sector Skills Councils' databases

At some stage during an Apprenticeship, every Advanced Apprentice must be registered with a Sector Skills Council, even if only towards the end of the programme, as relevant to the employment sector concerned. At completion, the SSC issues documentation recording the Apprentice's success and detailing the qualifications achieved. In principle, every successful Advanced Apprentice who enters higher education via UCAS or advance further education (if for NVQ Level 4, say) could be matched to HESA and/or ILR. The SSCs contacted in this investigation do not routinely capture data on final destinations of their Apprentices, though a number have tried and all are committed to doing so in due course. Also, they have not carried out a progression matching exercise. As will be seen elsewhere in this report, there is a pervasive belief that successful Apprentices are unlikely to progress to higher education, or anywhere else for that matter, for a few years until they have established themselves more firmly in their careers.

SSC databases are still in their infancy, in many ways. Even after ten years, it is believed that many Apprentices are still "using" their original qualifications and have not progressed in the sense of this investigation. Since the SSCs were formed in 2003, the legacy of earlier poor data sources has become apparent and none was able to provide information that could have been inferred into the progression analysis. Clearly any recommendation on data capture must include appropriate logging and flagging of individuals registered within SSCs so that they may be tracked through later parts of their careers in education and training.

There is no shortage of data and other information on learners in England, including Advanced Apprentices. However, such material is not currently aligned to permit easy analysis, nor any analysis at all in many instances. The work of the joint LSC-HEFCE-HESA data group will be important if any meaningful conclusions are to be drawn in the years ahead as to the effectiveness of government policy on progression of Apprentices into higher levels of education and/or training.

## 8. The number of Apprentices progressing to Level 4 programmes

Applications to HE on academic routes is much more “successful” than are vocational routes. In recent years, about 90 per cent of applicants gaining 2 A-levels by the age of 19 have progressed to higher education. Only about 45 per cent of applicants offering Level 3 vocational qualifications gained admission.<sup>67</sup> The Advanced Apprenticeship is a special case of vocational qualifications since it represents a platform of learning and related employment skills, and HE participation seems to be even less among successful completers. It has been said during the conduct of this investigation that progression from an ACVE would be more common and “easier” than from an NVQ. Recording all work-based and vocational qualifications together is unhelpful because they are different in style, as are the learners who undertake such programmes, although the intention of their development was quite similar. There seems to be a requirement to distinguish between various types of vocational qualification in assessing progression readiness and acceptability in HEIs.

Surveys were addressed to HEIs and MEG colleges, and further questions were addressed to Sector Skills Councils, awarding bodies and government agencies including HESA, UCAS, HEFCE, LSC, Aimhigher and Connexions. As noted in Chapter 7, HEIs have not recorded the number of Apprentices entering their programmes because such data have not been required by their funding or statistical agencies. Colleges of further education display a mixed approach, with a minority able to report on the progression of their own Apprentices into their “own” HE programmes. In general, however, they have made HEIFE returns in the past and now to HESA, which are much less specific than the ILR to which they are accustomed.

Typical of the diverse Sector Skills Council responses to these questions are the following:

*... we have no policy yet on Level 4 because we assume that Advanced Apprentices will progress in their employment for some years before starting new courses...*

*... we have no policy on progression of Apprentices but we are reviewing it with local colleges... actually we have a poor uptake on Advanced Apprentices and foresee no demand for a Foundation Degree in our sector...*

*... [this SSC] does have an Apprenticeship progression policy. I would also like recognition by DfES/LSC for a Higher Apprenticeship programme/framework...*

*... who wants them to carry on being students, anyway? Not employers, I don't think...*

*... I don't know how many Apprentices actually progress from L2 to L3 and then onto Degree – we just don't have access to that information – maybe we need to carry out some research...*

None of the Sector Skills Councils contacted was able to provide numbers of Apprentices progressing to higher education and their role in that process seemed confused. The most common opinion expressed was that very few Apprentices could be expected to progress to higher education, and for two main reasons:

- (i) successful Apprentices are more interested in employment and their employers are not expected to sponsor them into higher education until they have “proved” themselves at work; they may progress to Level 4 qualifications after a few more years in employment
- (ii) Apprenticeships are not designed principally to provide entry to higher education; they are intended for young people who want to work, not continue their education in institutions.

This raises the issue of SSCs leading on the development of learning programmes. They themselves are unsure that they possess the expertise and one respondent commented,

*“... what we do best is advising on skills in our industry; ask me about occupational standards and I'll tell you... we have to ask other people about much of the higher level development...”*

More than one awarding body in the survey, various new universities and colleges of further education asked why they were not able to take the lead in developing credible learning programmes. Awarding bodies, in particular, expressed the view that that is what exactly they have been established to do.

Likewise, some HEIs are now exploring particular progression routes for Apprentices but hardly any data exists on the essential detail required to assess the effectiveness of the link. All HEIs were asked the following questions<sup>68</sup>:

- *Please estimate enrolment within your organisation to the following sector studies or funded programmes (a range of options given)*
- *If your institution has admitted Apprentices, please indicate the Apprenticeship Framework they followed before entry (a range of options given)*
- *Higher education programmes upon which Apprentices and vocational learners are enrolled (a range of options given).*

Only two HEIs and three MEG colleges were able to provide data responses to these questions and then only with caveats about the reliability of information provided by learners. This uncertainty reflected closely the paucity of data available to and from HESA, HEFCE, LSC, UCAS, and the awarding bodies.

<sup>67</sup> *Youth Cohort Study: The Activities And Experiences of 21 Year Olds: England and Wales 2000*, DfES 2001

<sup>68</sup> Survey A in Annex 11.3

## 8.1 LSDA estimates

In their study, Connor & Little<sup>69</sup> estimated that only 0.7 per cent of successful Advanced Apprentices entered higher education in 2002-03, with a further 0.8 per cent doing so without completion of their frameworks. The following data are available from the LSC Work-Based Learning of Young People trainee database and are reported by Connor & Little:

Table 8.1 Learning outcomes and destination of Advanced Modern Apprentices; England 2002-03		
Destination	Learning outcome	
	Apprenticeship achieved	Apprenticeship partially achieved
Employment or self-employment	19,589	1,944
Entered higher education	171	27
(% entered higher education)	0.7%	0.8%
All other known destinations	2,560	960
Destination unknown	960	351
Total	23,280	3,282

The very small numbers of Advanced Apprentices progressing to higher education are apparent. These figures are believed to be underestimates since they relied heavily upon the self-reporting of Apprentices leaving frameworks and voluntary disclosure to UCAS, HESA, other agencies and institutions. However, even if these data were to be 100 per cent in error, the actual number of Apprentices entering higher education would be very small by comparison with assumptions made by policy-makers. Equally of concern, but not included in this investigation, is the low overall rate of completion of advanced Apprenticeships, at lower than 50 per cent of those that started in 2002-03.

The conclusions of the LSDA study concur with the findings of this investigation: that the Advanced Apprenticeship is not (they say, possibly should not) be regarded as a principal preparation for entry to higher education and that there is no evidence of demand for progression.

Recent additional research, commissioned by Universities-UK via Action on Access<sup>70</sup>, will investigate attitudes and expertise within universities in the context of the wide range of vocational pathways available to non A-level entrants. In addition to the parity of esteem emphasised by many reports since Dearing, this research will also attempt to match progression "success" with the types of qualification offered by applicants, including Apprenticeship frameworks. Helen Connor will be engaged in that investigation also, and expects to build upon the findings of the LSDA research. The current opinion of the putative research group is that Apprenticeships will continue to

represent a small proportion of vocational award holders who progress to higher education, and that vocational qualifications have continued to be regarded in a different light by admissions personnel and systems in HE.

A related issue of measurement again arises in the definition of higher education, and this is not being explored thoroughly. It relates to short courses, commercial updating, accredited units and certificates in many universities. The Open University, various business schools and many practical faculties<sup>71</sup> make such short term provision and regard it as perfectly valid higher education for specific purposes. Further research and assessment should be made over a longer period to judge the effectiveness of Level 3 vocational qualifications as foundations for these types of higher education.

## 8.2 Aimhigher data

There have been various Aimhigher projects during 2003-05, each attempting to estimate the rate of progression from vocational pathways into higher education, including that for Advanced Apprenticeships.<sup>72</sup> Quantitative information has been extremely difficult to obtain from the eleven 'Aimhighers' contacted and they have expressed their opinions clearly:

- *I think the main message is that very very few WBL ... are progressing. This is however quite important ... I think it simply reaffirms the lack of information currently collated about WBL progressing to HE...even if the figures were higher we wouldn't know about it*
- *...of about 150 AAs to my knowledge, only two have progressed to Level 4; one to HNC and the other to NVQ4 company-based...*
- *...our 494 leavers turned into 259 who continued in full-time employment, 1 that entered higher education, 5 in further education...65 destinations are unknown...how many of them went to HE?...*
- *...to be honest we haven't a clue how many AAs go on to HE but I suspect hardly any...one or two in a hundred I should think because employers seem hard pressed even to support the AA, never mind HE...*
- *...The tracking issue seems to be the real problem... universities want to assess entry to Foundation Degrees and the data only tells them that applicants have a Level 3 and not whether it's an Apprenticeship...at the moment it looks as though AAs just don't progress to HE but can we believe it?...*

This situation is very unsatisfactory and the best available information is anecdotal, based almost entirely on case studies, individual accounts and occasional examples of good practice from local employers. The belief among Aimhigher senior officers is that the progression rate is of the order of 1-2 per cent of Advanced Apprentices.

<sup>69</sup> LSDA 2005, op cit.

<sup>70</sup> Action on Access: *University Admissions & Vocational Pathways*, to be completed by October 2005

<sup>71</sup> Such as agriculture, hospitality & catering, construction & fabrication

<sup>72</sup> For example *The Progression of Advanced Apprentices into Higher Education*, Aimhigher London West, July 2004

### 8.3 HE institution data

As noted in Chapter 7, HEIs do not generally record the admission of Advanced Apprentices since it is not required that they do so, and the Apprenticeship is not a qualification. However, a few particular HEIs have maintained some form of record to support their widening participation and access policies.<sup>73</sup> All these studies and debates bemoan the same lack of data and relevant information. Indeed, it is two years since the question was posed “What does good information look like?”<sup>74</sup> and still the issues remain the same: what is the Apprenticeship for, how do we capture progression to higher level of learning, are Apprenticeships a good preparation for higher study?

Probing questions to a range of HEIs has led to the conclusion that annual admission of Advanced Apprentices is of the order of 200 enrolled on all HEI programmes. This equates to about 1.3 equivalent students per HEI but, in reality, the distribution appears to range from zero (the vast majority) to 8 or 10 in very specific HE programmes such as Care and/or Nursing Studies, Construction, Business Management, specialised Engineering, Information & Communication Technology, and Hospitality & Catering. It appears that the majority of such HE entrants are engaged initially on HND/HNC programmes rather than on Foundation Degrees or Honours Degrees. However, the opinion is held strongly in post-’92 universities that progression beyond HND/C will be encouraged for suitable learners but that this process may take some years to work its way into general progression mechanisms.

The UVAC 2005(2)<sup>75</sup> admissions service data has produced the following estimate for applications to 12 HEIs but there is no detail on the actual number of successful entrants to the HEIs or onto which higher level programmes

For 12 HEIs	Total applications to undergraduate or equivalent programmes	AA-related applications
Totals	178,900 approx	85 approx

These results confirm the apparently low uptake of higher education opportunities among Advanced Apprenticeship holders, for the wide range of reasons expressed by other writers and in UVAC 2005[2]. What has not been measured, because no such data are recorded, is how many Advanced Apprentices complete HE programmes. Chapter 7 analyses survey data on the experiences of Apprentices when in higher education and what special provision has been made by some institutions.

### 8.4 FE Institution data

About 10 per cent of all funded higher education (defined in a certain way at Level 4) is delivered in colleges of further education. Collectively, they have a tradition of recording learner details and achievements to an extent that exceed that in HEIs. The Mixed

Economy Group of twenty colleges accounts for about 75 per cent of this delivery, and their records may be assumed to be more reliable than many other institutions. On that basis, the MEG colleges were surveyed<sup>76</sup> separately and their experience was found to be almost identical to HEIs in respect of Apprenticeship progression, as the following quotations indicate:

- *...we have 39 Apprentices on HE programmes...mostly engineering we’re probably unusual in the size of our group...*
- *...of the 400-odd Apprentices last year, just four have gone onto higher level studies...all HNC engineering...part-time study while at work...*
- *...we had nearly 700 Apprentices in college last year and maybe 20 have gone onto higher levels...mostly Engineering and Construction BTEC Highers but a handful on NVQ4s such as Hair & Beauty and Retailing...organised with their employers...*

The experience of colleges of further education, based just on large MEG members, indicates that the Foundation Degree is not the natural route for HE progression. Yet, as seen in Chapter 3, this is where the policy emphasis has been laid. Sector Skill Council sector frameworks are intended to outline progression routes into Foundation Degrees from Advanced Apprenticeships. From responses to the survey, 97 Apprentices had progressed to higher education (not necessarily to Foundation Degrees) from a 2003-04 sampled cohort of about 2000 Apprentices. That gives a progression rate of 4.8 per cent in MEG colleges, to Level 4 in one form or other. This exceeds the results in Table 9.1 but needs further investigation to ensure its reliability and its relevance to the entire FE sector. It is likely that successful colleges, with sizeable groups of Apprentices progressing to HE, responded more freely to the survey than did the many small colleges or those with no progressions to report. Across the entire FE sector, the HEI experience of “1 or 2 per cent” may be reflected once more but, at this moment, there is no way to be certain.

### 8.5 Awarding body data

By their nature and their operational processes, awarding bodies retain data on registrations of candidates but not their destinations. It is a peculiarity of the Apprenticeship framework that no single organisation is aware of a candidate’s progress through the programme until the very end. Even at that stage, only the Sector Skills Councils know the details of successful learners and they share the final outcome with provider organisations, be they colleges, training companies, employers and/or managing agents. After completion, neither the Sector Skills Councils nor the awarding bodies can be sure of Apprentices’ progression to higher levels of learning.

As part of this investigation, two large awarding bodies (City & Guilds and Edexcel) were contacted to discover any information link between components of the Apprenticeship qualification structure. All Advanced Apprentices must complete NVQ Level 3, a technical certificate and a

<sup>73</sup> Examples: (i) Harvey J (2003) *Routes to Higher Education for engineering Apprentices*, Sheffield Hallam University, (ii) *Apprenticeship Progression*, Conference 21 February 2005, Leeds Metropolitan University and SkillsActive

<sup>74</sup> *Key issues in the Modern Apprenticeship Route in Yorkshire & Humberside*, paper to LSRN conference, Warwick University, December 2003

<sup>75</sup> Op cit. Chapter 6

<sup>76</sup> Survey B, Annex 11.3

basic skills qualification. Accordingly, it seemed possible in principle to match the number of registrations for one of these qualifications with number on the others, and so determine the number of Apprentices progressing through Levels 2 and 3 without reference to Sector Skills Councils. In fact, no such matching is carried out, although there is a joint awarding body forum on whose agenda this possibility is now being considered.

The fourth component of Advanced Apprenticeship is Employment Rights and Responsibilities (known as ERR) which all successful Apprentices must complete. Typically, this is a short programme of study and internal assessment for which records of achievement must be kept and included in the return to the Sector Skills Council for completion of the Apprenticeship framework. ERR is specified by the relevant Sector Skills Council<sup>77</sup>, and is very generic in its content, so that it could be applied to practically every Apprenticeship regardless of the sector in which Apprentices are registered. However, there is no central or awarding body to collate details of achievement. Completion of ERR would be evidence of potential completion of the Apprenticeship and could be recorded as such if only it were an accredited learning outcome. Since it is not even a component of a qualification, there is no practical or statutory means to record it within the UCAS or HESA data stream.

Overall, data on completion of Advanced Apprenticeships and progression to Level 4 cannot currently be deduced from information held by the awarding bodies.

## 8.6 Estimates and observations

It is clear that the number of Advanced Apprentices entering higher education in recent years is very small. All the evidence points to a participation rate between 2 and 4 per cent of Apprentices, whether they complete the framework or not. Possession of NVQ Level 3 and/or of an appropriate technical certificate is, of itself, sufficient to obtain admission to many HEIs and to HE programmes in all MEG colleges for a student is intent on doing so. The benefits of completing an Advanced Apprenticeship are related to employment, not to HE progression, and this is reflected in some of the data which shows non-completers entering HE at a slightly higher rate than completers.

Anecdotally, every year a significant number of Advanced Apprentices withdraw from their frameworks (and from employment) to enter full time further education. One student respondent gave as the main reason for this change of heart: "...Advanced Apprenticeship is more difficult than A-levels because you have to do two different qualifications and hold down a job at the same time..."

The extent of this withdrawal and transfer should be investigated further since Advanced Apprentices are assumed to be learners who prefer practical work and are less interested in courses and

assessment. Yet the Advanced Apprenticeship combines more overall learning activity and more complex assessment than most "traditional" programmes of university preparation.

In summary, the number of Advanced Apprentices entering higher education appears to be affected by the following parameters:

**8.6.1** No one is sure of the actual number of Advanced Apprentices entering higher education and, at this moment, there is no way to measure participation short of matching the individual learners as they pass from further education (the ILR) to higher education (HESA), and taking into account the issue of the Apprenticeship certificate by the Sector Skills Councils.

**8.6.2** The "best" estimate is that 1.5 per cent of completed Apprenticeships lead immediately to higher education and a further 2 per cent enter by dint of their NVQs and/or technical certificates without completion of the full framework. This leads to an expectation that between 750 and 1000 Advanced Apprenticeship starters in 2002-03 entered Level 4 studies in the 2004-05 session, on all programmes including NVQ4 and Honours Degrees.

**8.6.3** Advanced Apprentices do not (or are not encouraged to) apply for higher level courses of study. Also, Sector Skills Councils and Aimhigher believe that employers are unwilling to sponsor more advanced study until an Apprentice has gained suitable experience in the workplace.

**8.6.4** Progression of advance Apprentices may be expected to be delayed beyond the year of completion. The success of the progression strategy may be by judged only after a suitable long period has elapsed, and that is estimated by some respondents to be 4 or 5 years.

**8.6.5** There are difficulties in the HEI admission process which militate against the progression of Advanced Apprentices:

- tutors or other personnel are unsure as the standing of the Advanced Apprenticeship by comparison with qualifications that possess tariff values in UCAS and that are logged by HESA
- they do not understand the structure of Advanced Apprenticeship and that it contains qualifications which their institutions have said they will accept for admission
- not all advance Apprenticeships are viewed equally, even by those institutions (mainly MEG colleges and 1992 universities) who accept them for admission; in particular, the standard and quality assurance basis for the many technical certificate are not regarded as equal or appropriate to the needs of higher level study.

**8.6.6** The need for a unique learner identifier is reinforced by these findings, if education policy is to be assessed in relation to retention, achievement and progression of Advanced Apprentices.

<sup>77</sup> A good early example, *Employment Responsibilities and Rights for the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship Level 3: Guidance for Learning Providers and Employers*, Hospitality Training Foundation, 2001

## 9. Conclusions and recommendations

It became apparent during this investigation that the progression of Apprentices into higher education is hampered by a number of structural or organisational difficulties and/or misunderstandings within the various sectors involved in the process. No one of the following five factors, if resolved alone, can alleviate the shortcomings of the policy that is intended to promote progression.

### 9.1 The status of the Advanced Apprenticeship

Because the Advanced Apprenticeship is not a qualification, although the majority of its components are, it has no standing within "normal" university application procedures. It has carried no UCAS tariff and admissions staff have been unable to equate it to their institutional entry requirements. There has been nothing similar in structure in England and Wales since 1950, when the Higher School Certificate (a set of four examinations taken at one sitting) was replaced by the individual examinations of the GCE Advanced level.<sup>78</sup> The international baccalaureate is close in concept to the Advanced Apprenticeship, and has standing within UCAS and the other agencies, but the Apprenticeship has not.

Every admissions tutor or manager interviewed during this investigation has adopted the same stance: Advanced Apprenticeship is not a recognised qualification and they are not legally obliged to record it. From September 2004, HESA require that HE entrants should be logged as possessing the Advanced Apprenticeship if the applicant indicates accordingly. The process is voluntary on the part of the applicant although institutions are required to use their best endeavours to elicit the information. It is not clear what sanctions may apply if an institution makes a nil Apprenticeship return and then subsequently a number of Apprentices come to light at that institution.

It is **recommended** that this situation be clarified. Suggestions from admissions tutors and Connexions advisors include:

- (i) The Advanced Apprenticeship becomes an accredited qualification with a tariff value, probably over and above the rating of the NVQ Level 3. There are difficulties with this proposal. First, the Advanced Apprenticeship would need to be formulated within the QCA framework and accredited by an awarding body, working with the appropriate SSC as the standard setting body. Since the Apprenticeship comprises more than one type of qualification, it is not easy to see how an existing awarding body could provide the necessary quality assurance or set the overall standard of the new "qualification". Secondly, the role of Sector Skills Councils in such a process would require amendment so that they become advisory to a new body which would bring together the Federation of Awarding Bodies and an HE organisation such as UVAC, which together would combine knowledge of national awards and the FE-HE boundary. By this means, the quality and standards responsibilities of SSCs with regard to Apprenticeship would transfer to another (awarding) body, which would be neither a

delivery institution (such as a university) nor a single private company.

- (ii) The common assessed component of the advanced Apprenticeship, the NVQ Level 3, is viewed as the base learning experience for Apprentices. This would leave the technical certificate as the main qualifying certificate for HE admission, which has been the Level 3 definition for many of these qualifications in the past. This would require a concomitant review and possible rewriting of the specification for technical certificates, to ensure that they contain appropriate material and achieve a suitable standard for higher education admission. It would take account of the very diverse and allegedly unreliable nature of many technical certificates. They often can be quite small in content and learning activity, of uncertain technical and intellectual standard, and frequently so highly specialised as not to be recognisable as preparatory to any existing higher education programme. However, some technical certificates have enjoyed good standing in their vocations and trades for many years, and major awarding bodies will question the negation of their contributions to the proper standards of some Advanced Apprenticeships. Also, colleges, employers and learners will question the value of a technical certificate that carries no weight beyond completing the Advanced Apprenticeship, and such certificates could fall into disrepute.
- (iii) Impose a quality and standards requirement upon Level 3 technical certificates, which is not always present at the moment. Some are held in high esteem by both institutions and employers but others are believed to be narrow, craft-based and insufficiently demanding to provide a basis for higher education. This approach would require technical certificates to be subjected to an external agency accreditation process involving HEIs.

### 9.2 Components within the Advanced Apprenticeship

The ancient mechanisms for Apprenticeship and indenture were not envisaged as preparatory to advanced study. That seems still to be the opinion of very many employers and their employees. Even so, there appears also to be stakeholder consensus around the conclusions of the Cassels Report: that Advanced Apprentices should be technically competent, possess a nationally recognised vocational qualification, be aware of the rights and responsibilities associated with employment, and possess skills essential for working with others and by oneself. There seems to be less agreement over the importance to be attached to these components and their status for employment, for further study, for promotion within employment, and so on. Even the Cassels Report did not envisage higher education as a primary outcome of an Advanced Apprenticeship.

<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, the new school-leaving Diplomas proposed by DfES appear to represent a return to the multiple-unit certificate of the pre-O Level period

From their inception, Advanced Apprenticeships were intended to provide highly skilled entrants to the work force. Frameworks have been developed to satisfy this need and progression to higher education is not widely viewed as concomitant or even desirable, not even by Apprentices themselves. The attitudes of Sector Skills Councils are as diverse as their occupational basis. Some in higher technological fields of employment intend their frameworks to be “as good as A-levels” in the development of knowledge and skills. Others regard their frameworks as essentially for employment. Both attitudes are observed also in the prospectuses of colleges of further education, sometimes differentially between Advanced Apprenticeships in the same institution.

It is **recommended** that all Advanced Apprenticeships should be clearly labelled to indicate the opportunities for progression to higher education. Some Sector Skills Councils and HEIs do not believe that Advanced Apprenticeships provide the necessary foundations in study, in intellectual rigour and development, or in meeting a national shortage of employees (or managers, for that matter) at Level 4. It is important that the options for Level 4 progression should be enumerated within the Advanced Apprenticeship framework, even if it does not include higher education in the traditional sense of institutional attendance.

The completion rate of Advanced Apprenticeships is only about 50 per cent of those that start. One of the reasons proffered by colleges of further education, by Connexions and by Sector Skills Councils is the onerous burden of learning and assessment imposed on young people who have decided already not to continue in an environment of “teaching and examinations”. Stated simply, Advanced Apprenticeships are often viewed as “more difficult” than traditional approaches to provision intended to be transitional between Levels 3 and 4 and Apprentice learners are required to be in work also.

It is **recommended** that the burden of learning and assessment within Advanced Apprenticeship be reviewed with the intention of reducing it to a level consistent with the needs of employers and the expectations of HEIs.

A further feature of the framework structure affects the willingness of Advanced Apprentices to complete programmes. It is the ability to obtain full time employment without completion, once certain skills have been acquired. Various respondents have said that possession of the technical certificate<sup>79</sup> is sufficient for employment in most trades, that the NVQ Level 3 is a “bonus qualification” but not required, and that the other components are immaterial. This perception should be tested further in the context of learner achievement and progression. Since colleges and other providers are funded on a “tapered” basis for their input to Apprenticeships, non-achievement often represents a real and financial cost through loss of income associated with effort already expended. In this sense, the attainment of full time employment in a relevant occupation is logged as a “failure”, whereas many stakeholders including colleges regard it as an inevitable and sufficient outcome in a wide range of occupations.

It has been **recommended** by many participants that the funding of Apprenticeships and their component learning activities be reviewed in the context of one successful outcome being suitable employment after completion of a stated element of the framework. Of course, such a review could open a floodgate of funding requests connected to partial completion of NVQs, for example, where learners have delayed or abandoned full completion but obtained verifiable employment. However, Apprenticeships are a special case, it is argued by SSCs and colleges, because of the timetable imposed upon Apprentice-learners, which may not match their or their employers’ plans for progression in the workplace, to other qualifications, to different regions of the country and so on.<sup>80</sup>

It is **recommended** that the design of Level 4 qualifications (of all the types available) and other learning programmes be co-ordinated to meet the needs of Advanced Apprentices and their employers, including part-time study, accreditation of work-based learning and the accreditation of work experience. It is apparent that the higher education sector on the whole has a substantially under-developed role in recognising and supporting work-based learning. Various agencies desire a work-based progression route from Apprenticeship, through to higher education without artificial barriers, so that learning may be valued wherever and whenever it takes place.

### 9.3 Preparation of Apprentices for higher education

In responses to these surveys, a significant proportion of HEIs and also some colleges of further education state that Advanced Apprentices are “not ready for HE ways of learning” and “...they are deficient in essential knowledge...and essential skills...”. It would be easy to interpret these responses as misunderstanding of the nature and status of Apprenticeship-based learning at the advanced level. The fact that colleges of further education hold the same view is more significant than if only HEIs expressed it. After all, the college sector makes provision for Apprenticeship frameworks, NVQs Level 3 and 4, many Level 3 vocational certificates and also for Foundation Degrees, HND/Cs, and Year 1 of Honours Degrees. MEG colleges and many 1992 universities have in place clear progression routes for Apprentices, and make no distinction between their admission and applicants with other qualifications.

Some SSC personnel express the opinion that they are not so concerned to provide pathways to higher education as they are to ensure adequate skills and aptitudes for the workplace. This perspective may display another misunderstanding about the status of NVQ Level 3 and many technical certificates within UCAS and HESA systems. They are adequate to obtain admission to higher education, and have been used to that effect for many years in the case of Edexcel and City & Guilds certificates.

<sup>79</sup> There are about 200 Level 3 qualifications recognised by QCA as technical certificates within Advanced Apprenticeships; available on the websites [www.qca.org.uk/604\\_1880.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/604_1880.html) and [www.qca.org.uk/604\\_1882.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/604_1882.html)

<sup>80</sup> One instance recounted during interview included a group of Advanced Apprentices who studied the NVQ at one college, the C&G Level 3 certificate at another, and the basic skills and ERR with a private training company. None of these providers, nor the employer, seemed to understand fully the funding opportunities nor the potential for over-charging within the current methodology

It is **recommended** that:

- (i) greater clarity of structure, purpose and intention be promoted within colleges, HEIs and SSCs so that the Apprenticeship is not viewed as just another complicated vocational qualification, but as an extension of existing qualifications that meet entry requirements already,
- (ii) as in 9.2 above, Advanced Apprenticeships be clearly labelled as intended for progression to higher education. The nature of this progression would involve judgement on the part of QCA, HEIs, UVAC, SSCs, and other employer representative agencies. The learner (award holder) would then be more certain that the examined components of the advance Apprenticeship (the NVQ3 and the technical certificate) would be viewed separately for application to higher education, and not as elements within an Apprenticeship. Unfortunately, such a measure would create two "levels" of advance Apprenticeship but, since they seem to exist already, it would formalise what is currently only a set of understandings, and
- (iii) the Apprenticeship Approvals Group should be extended to include representatives of higher education institution and professional bodies,
- (iv) the current policy emphasis on Apprentice progression to Foundation Degrees will understate the options and desirability of other Level 4 qualifications and learning routes; the definition of "higher education" should be put into the public arena for debate and agreement to include professional qualifications, and NVQ Level 4 and 5s,
- (v) HEIs should be engaged and adopt a stronger role in developing support for the delivery of NVQs as part of their contribution to the Framework for Achievement; by this means links will be created and strengthened between professional qualifications, higher vocational qualifications and the preparatory learning programmes followed by aspiring members of professions and trades.

What has not been suggested by any respondent is the raising of purely academic standards within Advanced Apprenticeships nor the inclusion of new material to prepare all Apprentices for university-level study. Even before progression estimates became available, various stakeholder groups believed that very few advance Apprentices would or even should undertake university-level study. All respondents believe that the Advanced Apprenticeship fulfils a particular purpose and that it should not be subverted to meet the minority demands of higher education, whose admission requirements are met through many other avenues, anyway.

## 9.4 Barriers to progress and practice to overcome them

The Advanced Apprenticeship including technical certificates is relatively new as a set of learning outcomes and some are not yet fully formulated. The Foundation Degree is even newer. It is widely held that this route into higher education may become better established in time, much as did BTEC National awards, the GNVQ and similar vocationally-related qualifications. Nonetheless, none of the responses to surveys suggested that the Advanced Apprenticeship route will become popular or even generally desirable because of one over-riding barrier to entry: the unwillingness of Apprentices or their employers to contemplate full-time higher education as an immediate route for progression. More acceptable seems to be part-time higher education, in the employee's own time and possibly at his/her own expense. Considerable work has been undertaken to provide an educational structure to support these developments on the basis of national occupational standards.<sup>81</sup> More likely, it seems to be believed, is delayed entry to higher education after four or five years of employment experience, in which case a national system should be agreed for the accreditation of prior experience and learning. This has already been formulated by recent research and development, so that a standard approach is at least potentially available and being implemented in pilot centres across the HE sector.<sup>82</sup>

There do appear to be three main barriers to the progression of Advanced Apprentices to higher education, facing those who desire to do so:

**9.4.1** Ignorance on the part of HEI admission personnel as to the composition and status of the frameworks, frequently acknowledged by those individuals and requesting assistance. It is **recommended** that UCAS, UVAC, LSC, Connexions, awarding bodies and other organisations should develop and promote an awareness-raising exercise for the benefit of all concerned. Again, the work of Hughes (UVAC) clearly indicates the need for and types of guidance that are required in the sector.<sup>83</sup>

**9.4.2** The quantum change experienced by learners from NVQ and most technical certificate teaching, learning and assessment, to that of higher education delivery. Principally, this change centres on self-directed learning, traditional (not student-related) teaching methods, assessments based on a written approach especially the traditional essay, and attitudes towards student life which are not employment-related. One HEI respondent stated, "...our tutors object to having to make allowances for any students, not just those with BTEC or NVQs...". Such an attitude displays ignorance of the volume and diversity of learning activity included in the Advanced Apprenticeship. It is judged by many participants to exceed that required to obtain the NVQ Level 3 by itself or a technical certificate by itself. It strengthens further the recommendation that higher education admissions personnel should receive more information and guidance. The best

<sup>81</sup> (i) Roodhouse S and Hemsworth D, Eds (2003) *Fit for Purpose: The use of National Occupational Standards in higher education to meet the needs of employment. A generic guide for curriculum designers and deliverers*, UVAC, (ii) Brennan L (2005) *Integrating Work-Based Learning into Higher Education: A Guide to Good Practice*, UVAC

<sup>82</sup> Garnett, J, Portwood D and Costley, C (2004) *Bridging Rhetoric and Reality: Accreditation of prior experiential learning in the UK (APEL)*, UVAC

<sup>83</sup> Pauline Hughes, UVAC 2004, op cit.

examples of institutions which have been able to ease the transfer of Apprentices lead to the following **recommendations**:

- (i) as a matter of routine, HEIs and colleges delivering higher education programmes to Apprentices should provide induction arrangements including study skills guidance, reinforcement of language and other communications skills, development of relevant numeracy and the use of number, and an awareness of the cognitive requirements of higher level study and assessment; it is clear that a few colleges do make such special provision but it is not widespread and is not funded specially by HEFCE or LSC,
- (ii) teaching and assessment methodologies should be developed by HEIs and colleges delivering higher education programmes, to take account even more of the fact that practical and technical skills are being tested in higher level vocational qualifications such as HND, HNC and Foundation Degrees; in a sense, this ought not to be too difficult in a sector which is accustomed to testing the non-written skills of budding professionals in medicine, architecture, law and agriculture, and has been commonplace for many years in accountancy and business management, modern languages, art & design, and some aspects of engineering; in this context, it is surprising that Apprentices and institution staff all express the view that learning involves a “quantum change”; there is a joint role here for UVAC, UKCoSDA, HE Academy LSDA and others.
- (iii) the accreditation of work-based learning should be progressed as a matter of urgency.

**9.4.3** It is **recommended** that a role be developed for representatives of colleges in the Mixed Economy Group which bridge the FE-HE boundary by offering accredited and validated programmes in both sectors. For many years, MEG colleges have managed the relative capital constraints imposed upon them by FE funding and still succeeded in satisfying the academic and organisation goals of their validating universities. They are well placed to advise and guide other institutions on progression issues associated with Advanced Apprentices, and to participate in accreditation, approval and implementation of national policies.

## 9.5 Data requirements

The evidential base for the progression policy and planning of Advanced Apprentices is limited to anecdotes and to samples derived from inadequate data collection. All participants acknowledge that the paucity is a serious hindrance to their success. If progression policy were to be working well, no one would know that to be the case. Likewise, there has been an assumption in some circles that a 2 or 3 per cent progression rate is below expectation but there are no stated targets and figures are not reliable, so the assumption is not well based. All agencies agree that Advanced Apprentices represent an almost unknown cohort of learners from a progression point of view.

The following **recommendations** arise from opinions expressed within the various agencies and also reflect work that has commenced already:

**9.5.1** It is essential to be able to match those Apprentices who complete their frameworks with the same individuals as entrants to higher education in all institutions and all programmes of study. This implies a reliable learner identifier code system, a reliable destination return or both. Currently, neither is thought to be close to agreement or implementation.

**9.5.2** It is equally important to register Apprentices who fail to complete their frameworks, but who progress to higher education nonetheless. These statistics will provide a measure of the HE-preparedness of learners engaged on NVQ Level 3 and a range of technical certificates. The need for a reliable matching of individuals is the same as in 9.5.1.

**9.5.3** Opinions expressed in surveys indicate that the HE-validity of the Advanced Apprenticeship varies across the 106 approved frameworks.<sup>84</sup> In engineering, information technology, aspects of business administration, hospitality & catering, child & health & social care it is believed that Advanced Apprentices are well prepared for higher level study. The same seems not to be the case for construction<sup>85</sup>, hair & beauty, customer services and the motor industry, among others. It is important to obtain data on the relative progression from different frameworks so that appropriate policy (and maybe funding) can be derived to encourage those that are “ready for progression” and to set targets for those that are not. UVAC was requested to provide such an analysis, but data are not available.

**9.5.4** Recording of Advanced Apprentices who progress to higher education should be undertaken from the first stage of application. All respondents who expressed a view on admissions said that Apprenticeship did not appear in any database and was ignored as a consequence. It is believed that such recording will require the Apprenticeship to be accorded a tariff value or an equivalence within the UCAS system and then allocated a code within the HESA return. This recommendation links to 9.1 (i) and (ii) above.

<sup>84</sup> As at 23 February 2005, with 58 engaging learners at advanced level. Of these, the six most popular frameworks account for 53 per cent of Apprentices registered in 2003-04, and the “top ten” for 80 per cent

<sup>85</sup> Defined broadly to include building trades, plumbing, electrical installation and servicing, timber trades and heating & ventilation

**9.5.5** The respective roles of Sector Skills Councils, the LSC, the awarding bodies, the QCA and the higher education sector in general are unclear in respect of the tracking of learners from original enrolment as Apprentices to their eventual award (at whatever level) or their withdrawal from education and training. It has been requested by a number of respondents to the surveys that explicit responsibilities be allocated to each of these agencies and sectors, so that each individual Advanced Apprentice may be traced. Only by such a means will it be possible to determine the training and qualification needs of each vocational sector, the progression routes adopted by their Apprentices, the outcomes of their learning and the success of the policy for extending higher education into modern employment practice. In this context, UVAC has derived a data collection model paper for UCAS and significant progress has been made with DFES, UCAS and HESA on such a model.

## 9.6 Conclusions

It is widely regarded by respondents to the surveys as right and proper to make provision for the progression of able and motivated young (and older) people to higher levels of education and training. No agency, institution or individual appears deliberately to be creating barriers to that progression and there are many incentives for it to be encouraged, not least through funding and accolades in achievement of policy targets. However, the actions of agencies, institutions and individuals are not currently geared to the particular needs of Advanced Apprentices and neither are Apprentices accorded relevant status within the higher education sector. These shortcomings arise from a lack of structure, policy and guidance but are interpreted easily as obstruction, obfuscation and/or lack of care towards learners who wish to progress but experience difficulty.

As detailed elsewhere, the work of AimHigher and the SSC compacts is relevant to the implementation of Apprentice progression policy. However, such cases and policies appear as exemplars and isolated instances of good practice. There is still no overall agency charged with ensuring implementation. Lifelong learning networks are being proposed to collate and monitor the implementation in addition to their other local and regional roles.

Continuing fears expressed in the Apprenticeship sector still lead to a demand for multi-sector national monitoring and recording system. A national review is required of all aspects of Advanced Apprenticeship provision and progression. This should raise matters of teaching, learning and assessment methodology, the structure of Apprenticeships, data collection and analysis, and of the roles of the many agencies engaged in making the policy work. Without such a review, no one can be certain or even enjoy a degree of assurance that the best interests of the national economy are served by the Advanced Apprenticeship programme, and therefore not the interests of the individual learner either.

## 10. Annexes

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There are six annexes:

- 10.1** Approved Advanced Apprenticeship frameworks as at February 2005
- 10.2** Numbers of apparently successful Advanced Apprentices over a period in 2003-04
- 10.3** Copy of the original survey questionnaire distributed to a sample of higher education institutions and to a number of colleges of further education, including all MEG colleges.
- 10.4** Copy of the shorter questionnaire distributed to all higher education institutions
- 10.5** Higher education institutions responding to either the questionnaire or to later telephone enquiries
- 10.6** Recent good practice in promoting Advanced Apprenticeship progression to Foundation Degrees

## 10.1 Annex      Advanced Apprenticeships approved on 28 February 2005

<b>Title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Updated</b>
Accounting	Accountancy Occupational Standards Group (AOSG)	13 Jan 2005
Active Leisure and Learning	Skills Active	21 Feb 2005
Advice and Guidance	Employment NTO	28 Apr 2004
Agricultural Crops and Livestock	Lantra	13 Jan 2005
Amenity Horticulture	Lantra	13 Jan 2005
Animal Care	Lantra	13 Jan 2005
Arts and Entertainment	Metier, NTO for Arts & Entertainment	31 Jul 2003
Aviation	GoSkills – The Sector Skills Council in Development for Passenger Transport	03 Jun 2004
Bakery	Improve Ltd	18 Feb 2005
Barbering	HABIA	18 Feb 2005
Beauty Therapy	HABIA	12 Nov 2003
Broadcast, Film, Video & Multimedia Industry	Skillset	23 Aug 2004
Builders Merchants	Builders Merchants Federation	26 Jun 2003
Building Services Engineers	SummitSkills	02 Feb 2005
Business Administration	Council for Administration (CfA)	02 Feb 2005
Ceramics	Association for Ceramic Training & Development	10 Jul 2003
Chemical, Pharmaceutical, Petrochemical Manufacturing and Refining Industries	Cogent	22 Feb 2005
Cleaning & Support Services	Cleaning Industry NTO (CINTO)	01 Jun 2004
Clothing Industry	Skillfast UK	28 Apr 2004
Communication Technologies (Telecoms)	e-skills UK	18 Feb 2005
Community Justice	Skills for Justice	14 Feb 2005
Construction (Craft)	Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)	10 Jul 2003
Construction (Technician)	Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)	26 Jun 2003
Contact Centres	e-skills UK	17 Feb 2005
Cultural Heritage	Cultural Heritage NTO (CHNTO)	31 Jul 2003
Customer Service	Institute of Customer Service	17 Aug 2004
Distribution, Warehousing and Storage Operations	Consumer Services Industry Authority	26 Jun 2003
Driving Goods Vehicles – 2	Skills for Logistics	07 Mar 2005
Early Years Care & Education	The Early Years National Training Organisation	05 May 2004
Electrical & Electronics Servicing	Electrical & Electronics Servicing Training Council (EESTC)	12 Nov 2003
Electricity Industry	Electricity Training Association	11 Nov 2003
Electrotechnical	SummitSkills	02 Feb 2005
Emergency Fire Service Operations	Employer's Organisation for Local Government	28 Apr 2004
Engineering	SEMTA	23 Feb 2005
Environmental Conservation	Lantra	13 Jan 2005
Equine Industry	Lantra	13 Jan 2005
Events	Ttento	14 Jul 2003
Farriery	Lantra NTO	14 Jul 2003
Fibreboard Packaging	Printing and Graphics Communication NTO	26 Jun 2003
Floristry	Lantra	11 Nov 2003
Food and Drink Manufacturing Operations	Improve Ltd	18 Feb 2005
Furniture Industry	FFINTO	22 Feb 2005
Gas Industry	Gas and Water Industries NTO	12 Nov 2003
Glass Industry	Glass Industry Sector Body	26 Jun 2003
Hairdressing	HABIA	16 Feb 2005
Health and Beauty Therapy	Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority (HABIA)	26 Jun 2003
Health and Social Care	Skills for Health	14 Feb 2005
Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVACR)	SummitSkills	02 Feb 2005
Hospitality	People 1st	08 Sep 2004
Housing	Asset Skills	02 Jun 2004
Information & Library Services	Information Services NTO (in partnership with Cultural Heritage NTO and Metier)	31 Jul 2003
Insurance	Financial Services	16 Feb 2005
International Trade & Services	Skills for Logistics	03 Oct 2003
IT Services and Development	e-skills UK	22 Feb 2005
IT User	e-skills	22 Feb 2005
Jewellery, Silversmithing & Allied Trades	Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA)	26 Jun 2003
Laboratory Technician (Generic)	SEMTA	31 Jan 2005

## 10.1 Annex Advanced Apprenticeships approved on 28 February 2005 (continued)

<b>Title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Updated</b>
Laboratory Technicians Working in Education	SEMTA	02 Jun 2004
Land-based Service Engineering	Lantra	13 Jan 2005
Learning & Development/Direct Training and Support	The Employment NTO	05 Aug 2003
Man-made Fibres	Man-made Fibres Training Trust	26 Jun 2003
Management	Management Standards Centre	13 Jan 2005
Marine Industry	British Marine Federation	13 Jan 2005
Meat and Poultry Processing	Improve Ltd	18 Feb 2005
Mechanical Engineering Services: Plumbing	SummitSkills	02 Feb 2005
Metals Processing	Metals Industry Skills and Performance Ltd	12 Nov 2003
Motor Industry (Vehicle Body Repair and Paint Operations)	Automotive Skills Ltd	13 Jan 2005
Motor Industry (Vehicle Maintenance and Repair)	Automotive Skills Ltd	07 Mar 2005
Motor Industry (Vehicle Parts Operation)	Automotive Skills Ltd	13 Jan 2005
Motor Industry (Vehicle Sales)	Automotive Skills Ltd	23 Feb 2005
Newspaper	Newspaper Society	26 Jun 2003
Occupational Health and Safety	Employment NTO	25 Apr 2003
Oil and Gas Extraction	Cogent (SSC for the Oil & Gas Extraction, Chemicals Manufacturing & Petroleum Industries)	26 Jun 2003
Operating Department Practice	Healthwork UK – The Health Care NTO	26 Jun 2003
Optical Manufacturing Technician	Science, Technology and Mathematics Council	26 Jun 2003
Paper Manufacturing	Paper Education and Training Council	26 Jun 2003
Payroll	Accountancy Occupational Standards Group (AOSG)	15 Apr 2003
Personnel Support	Employment NTO	25 Apr 2003
Pharmacy Technicians	SEMTA	21 May 2004
Photo Imaging	Skillset	13 Jan 2005
Photography & Photographic Processing	Photo Imaging NTO	22 Oct 2004
Physiological Measurement Technology	Skills for Health	12 Nov 2003
Polymer Processing	Polymer NTO	02 Sep 2003
Print & Printed Packaging	Printing and Graphics Communication NTO	13 Jan 2005
Procurement	Management Standards Centre	26 Jun 2003
Production Horticulture	Lantra	13 Jan 2005
Property Services	Asset Skills	03 Jun 2004
Providing Financial Services	Financial Services NTO	26 Jun 2003
Rail Engineering	Rail Industry Training Council Ltd	26 Jun 2003
Retail	Skillsmart	26 Feb 2004
Sales and Telesales	Marketing and Sales Standards Setting Body (MSSSB)	03 Mar 2004
Sea Fishing	Sea Fish Industry Authority	17 Jan 2005
Security Sector	Security Industry Training Organisation	13 Jan 2005
Signmaking	Polymer NTO	26 Jun 2003
Steel & Metals Industry	Metals Industry Skills and Performance	26 Jun 2003
Surface Coatings Industry	Training Alliance for Surface Coatings (TASC)	26 Jun 2003
Teaching Assistants	Employers' Organisation for local government	13 Jan 2005
Textiles	Skillfast UK	01 Mar 2004
The Equine Industry	Lantra	07 Jan 2005
Traffic Office	Skills for Logistics	24 Feb 2005
Transport Engineering and Maintenance	GoSkills	13 Jan 2005
Travel Services	Ttento	26 Jun 2003
Water Industry (Process Operations)	Gas and Water Industry NTO	26 Jun 2003
Wholesale, Distribution, Warehousing & Storage	Skills for Logistics	27 Jul 2004

## 10.2 Annex      Advanced Apprenticeship numbers quarterly cumulative leavers and success: August to January 2003/04

Framework	Leavers less transfers	Framework completed (%)
106 – Engineering	3371	40%
235 – Motor Industry	2213	29%
220 – Hospitality	2154	13%
263 – Customer Service	1956	21%
116 – Construction	1954	20%
102 – Business Administration	1854	26%
104 – Early Years Care and Education	1764	21%
105 – Electrotechnical	1636	51%
236 – Health and Social Care	1408	23%
217 – Hairdressing	1163	31%
201 – Accountancy	987	57%
115 – Travel Services	885	61%
112 – Retail	652	14%
117 – Plumbing	504	23%
260 – Management	399	10%
292 – Information Technology and Electronic Services	347	27%
231 – Active Leisure and Learning	337	13%
232 – Telecommunications	287	63%
212 – Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration	209	29%
265 – Gas Industry	157	67%
227 – Printing	136	39%
248 – Insurance	133	23%
293 – Call Handling	108	25%
247 – Equine Industry	103	24%
101 – Agricultural Crops and Livestock	102	49%
107 – Engineering Construction	60	53%
211 – Electricity Industry	60	75%
219 – Amenity Horticulture	56	9%
228 – Road Haulage and Distribution Industry	53	19%
206 – Maintaining Automotive Vehicles – Road Passenger Transport	50	38%
279 – Beauty Therapy	47	32%
215 – Furniture Industry	46	26%
267 – Wholesale, Distribution, Warehousing and Storage	44	25%
230 – Security Industry	41	46%
213 – Property Services	40	23%
103 – Chemical, Pharmaceutical, Petro-Chemical Manufacturing & Refining Industries	36	64%
299 – Farriery	30	97%
262 – Animal Care	28	25%
254 – Land-based Service Engineering	26	46%
113 – Metals Industry	24	33%
216 – Glass Industry	24	0%
234 – Marine Industry	21	71%
282 – Building Services Engineers	19	5%
202 – Aviation	18	89%
241 – Providing Financial Services (Banks and Building Societies)	16	44%
278 – Rail Transport Engineering	15	7%
244 – Floristry	14	36%
294 – Electrical & Electronic Servicing	14	7%
259 – International Trade and Services	12	50%
276 – Textiles	11	18%
291 – Occupational Health and Safety Practice	11	0%
214 – Emergency Fire Service Operations	10	40%
295 – Driving Goods Vehicles	9	11%
203 – Arts and Entertainment, Cultural Heritage, Information and Library Services	8	0%
237 – Newspaper Industry	8	75%
239 – Physiological Measurement Technicians (AMA only)	8	100%
111 – Polymer Processing and Signmaking	6	83%
233 – Timber Trades	5	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>25,810</b>	<b>30%</b>

## 10.3 Annex     The original questionnaire

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### **Apprentices' progress within the Higher Education Sector**

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

##### **Introduction**

It is Government policy to promote Level 3 vocational awards as alternatives to A-levels and other "general" school-leaving qualifications. The purpose of this survey is to gain information from across the sector, which will assist HEIs in achieving wider participation and improving access.

Of particular interest in this survey is the higher education experience of Apprentices (formerly Advanced Modern Apprentices) who apply for and gain admission to degrees and other Level 4 courses of study. Included in Apprentices are applicants and students who possess National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at Level 3, even if they have not completed the full framework of the Apprenticeship.

Working with the LSC, UVAC has undertaken to obtain data on the acceptability and applicability of Apprenticeships to HEIs, employers and individuals as a basis for higher education study and qualifications. Through this survey we also aim to gain an overview of Apprentices' experiences and to identify examples of good practice that, subject to the agreement of the HEIs concerned, can be shared with the sector.

There are eleven sections to this questionnaire, some relying upon data and others upon institutional policy and plans. Please feel able to omit answers to questions for which you do not have information or experience. Part completed questionnaires are still extremely valuable.

We would be grateful if you could return your questionnaire to Vicky Hall at UVAC by 17 December 2004. Address details are given at the end of the questionnaire.

All returned questionnaires will be treated in the strictest confidence by UVAC and individual responses will not be disclosed or attributed.

Thank you for your support.

<b>1</b>	<b>Admissions data</b>		
	Did your institution specifically record the total number of former Apprentices and NVQ Level 3 learners entering your undergraduate programmes in 2003-04 and/or 2004-05?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X for NO Apprentices and complete Q1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	X for YES Apprentices and go to Q2 Total number:
		<input type="checkbox"/>	X for NO NVQs and complete Q1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	X for YES NVQs and go to Q2 Total number:
	<b>For what reasons are these records not kept?</b>		
	Admission decisions are devolved to individual tutors or departments	<b>X relevant response</b>	
	No requirement to keep them		
	Do not believe it would affect institutional policy on admissions		
	Would require too complex a change to our recording system (e.g. software limitations)		
Not our policy to admit Apprentices or Level 3 NVQ holders			
Others. Please state			
<b>Although you do not keep these records, please provide estimates for the rest of the questionnaire, if possible and relevant.</b>			

2	<b>Apprentices:</b> <b>Please estimate enrolment within your organisation to the following sector studies or funded programmes.</b>	<b>Actual or estimated number of Apprentices in 2004-05</b>								
<b>Engineering: (total)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanical and/or motor vehicle</li> <li>• Manufacturing of all kinds</li> <li>• Civil</li> <li>• Chemical</li> <li>• Electrical and/or Electronic</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Extractive industries</li> <li>• Other – please state</li> </ul>		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> </table>								
<b>The built environment: (total)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Building services</li> <li>• Architecture</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Other – please state</li> </ul>		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> </table>								
<b>Food production and service: (total)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture and horticulture</li> <li>• Food technology and processing</li> <li>• Food preparation and catering</li> <li>• Hotel and hospitality management</li> <li>• Other – please state</li> </ul>		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> </table>								
<b>The business and financial environment: (total)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business studies</li> <li>• Business administration</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Accounting and accountancy</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Service industries</li> <li>• Human resource management</li> <li>• Transport and distribution (logistics)</li> <li>• Other – please state</li> </ul>		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> </table>								
<b>Computing and information technology: (total)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardware developments</li> <li>• Software design and systems engineering</li> <li>• Media, graphics, virtual reality</li> <li>• Commercial development; eg games</li> <li>• Other – please state</li> </ul>		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> </table>								
<b>Legislative and legal environment: (total)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law</li> <li>• Government and politics</li> <li>• Public administration</li> <li>• Social and/or community administration</li> <li>• Other – please state</li> </ul>		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> </table>								

<b>2</b>	<b>Apprentices:</b> <b>Please estimate enrolment within your organisation to the following sector studies or funded programmes.</b>	<b>Actual or estimated number of Apprentices in 2004-05</b>
	<b>Medical and health services: (total)</b>	
	• Medicine	
	• Psychology	
	• Nursing	
	• Radiography and related activities	
	• Pharmacy	
	• Health support services and administration	
	• Other – please state	
	<b>Education and training: (total)</b>	
	• Teacher training	
	• Librarianship	
	• Other – please state	
	<b>Physical and human sciences: (total)</b>	
	• Physics and astronomy	
	• Chemistry	
	• Biology, botany, zoology etc	
	• Other – please state	
	<b>Academic and general education: (total)</b>	
	• Languages and literature	
• Humanities and social sciences		
• Other – please state		
<b>Other occupations and vocations: please state</b>		

<b>3</b>	<b>If your institution has admitted Apprentices, please indicate the Apprenticeship Framework they followed before entry</b>		<b>Please X relevant response and approximate number of Apprentices (if known)</b>
	engineering		
	manufacturing		
	motor industry		
	construction		
	customer service		
	hotel and catering		
	business administration		
	health and social care		
	childcare		
	hairdressing and/or beauty therapy		
	retailing		
	agriculture and horticulture		
Others. Please state.			

<b>4</b>	<b>Higher education programmes upon which Apprentices and vocational learners are enrolled</b>		<b>Please X as appropriate</b>
	NVQ Level 4		
	Higher National Diploma or Certificate		
	Certificate of higher education		
	Diploma of higher education		
	Foundation Degree		
	Degree without Honours		
	Degree with Honours		
	Professional body qualifications		
	Statutory body qualifications		
	Others. Please state. (e.g. City and Guilds HPD or HPC)		

<b>5</b>	<b>Mode of attendance or study by Apprentices in your institution.</b>		<b>Please X as appropriate and give numbers if possible</b>
	Full time for at least one year		
	Full time for less than one year		
	Sandwich provision with work experience		
	Part time on a regular weekly basis		
	Part time on an irregular basis		
	Distance or remote learning via technology		
	Distance or remote learning by post		
	Accreditation of prior learning and/or experience		
Others. Please state.			

6	<b>Widening participation characteristics of Apprentices and vocational learners in your organisation or progressing from your provision.</b>	<b>Please estimate numbers and/or proportion if possible</b>	
		<b>Number</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
	Men students		
	Women students		
	From a recognised ethnic minority		
	Bearing widening participation status		
	Disabled by impairment of body function		
	Having learning difficulties and disabilities		
	Others. Please state.		

7	<b>Barriers faced by Apprentices in their entry to HE programmes</b>	<b>Please X here for YES</b>	<b>Please X here for NO</b>
	Are there admissions barriers faced by Apprentices?		
	<b>If YES, please indicate from your experience:</b>		
	• Lack of knowledge of Apprenticeship among admissions staff		
	• Lack of knowledge of Apprenticeship among academic staff		
	• We don't have the right programmes for them		
	• They are not ready for HE ways of learning		
	• They are deficient in essential knowledge		
	• They are deficient in essential skills		
	• We are uncertain about the standard of the Apprenticeship		
	• Previous Apprentices entering our institution encountered problems, high drop out rates etc.		
	• Others. Please state.		

8	<b>Overcoming barriers to the admission of Apprentices to HE programmes</b>	<b>Please X here for YES</b>	<b>Please X here for NO</b>
	Do you employ special processes to overcome barriers to entry form Apprentices?		
	<b>If YES, please indicate from your experience:</b>		
	• We have changed our curriculum to help them		
	• We give explicit credit for work experience		
	• Make allowances for different learning styles		
	• Extra tuition in programme materials		
	• Extra guidance on learning-skills		
	• Extra pastoral or tutorial support		
	• Administrative support		
	• Others. Please state.		

9	<b>Who in your organisation is responsible for assessing and advising on admission of Apprentices and vocational learners into higher education?</b>	<b>Please X as appropriate</b>	
		<b>This response</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
	Institution's central admission service or office		
	Bought-in advisory service		
	Normal admissions tutors		
	Individual members of teaching or training staff		
	Committee with members from local "feeder" organisations		
	Others. Please state		

10	<b>Are there examples of good data and management practice you are willing to provide in a face-to-face meeting or by post?</b>	<b>Please X as appropriate</b>	
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Later</b>
	Targeting recruitment of Apprentices and vocational learners to higher education		
	Recording entry qualifications and Apprentice frameworks when present and offered		
	Recording previous vocational programme or subject in detail		
	Recording social, environmental and disability status at entry to higher education		
Others: please state			

11	<b>Other agencies with interest in the admission process for Apprentices?</b>	<b>Please X as appropriate</b>		
		<b>Yes, now</b>	<b>Yes, later</b>	<b>Not really</b>
	Would you value help from external agencies in making admission decisions on Apprentices?			
	<b>If YES, which of the following could develop appropriate systems, in your view?</b>			
	• UVAC			
	• Sector Skills Councils			
	• Learning & Skills Development Agency			
	• Lifelong Learning Networks			
	• Major local employers			
	• Business organisations such as Chamber of Commerce			
• Others: please state				

Please use the following space to make any further observations or comment.

Name of person submitting this questionnaire		
Role or title within institution		
Name of institution		
Address		
Telephone		
Email address		
May UVAC contact you again about your responses?	X here for YES	X here for NO

All responses to this questionnaire are confidential to UVAC and the respondent.  
No names, data or other information will be attributable or identifiable in the report

## 10.4 Annex     The shorter questionnaire

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### **Apprentices' progress within the Higher Education Sector**

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

##### **Introduction**

It is Government policy to promote Level 3 vocational awards as alternatives to A-levels and other "general" school-leaving qualifications. The purpose of this survey is to gain information from across the sector, which will assist HEIs in achieving wider participation and improving access.

Of particular interest in this survey is the higher education experience of Apprentices (formerly Advanced Modern Apprentices) who apply for and gain admission to degrees and other Level 4 courses of study. Included in Apprentices are applicants and students who possess National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at Level 3, even if they have not completed the full framework of the Apprenticeship.

Working with the LSC, UVAC has undertaken to obtain data on the acceptability and applicability of Apprenticeships to HEIs, employers and individuals as a basis for higher education study and qualifications. Through this survey we also aim to gain an overview of Apprentices' experiences and to identify examples of good practice that can be shared with the sector, subject to the agreement of the HEIs concerned,

There are six sections to this questionnaire, relating generally to institutional policy and plans. Please feel able to omit answers to questions for which you do not have information or experience. Part completed questionnaires will still be extremely valuable.

We would be grateful if you could return your questionnaire to Vicky Hall at UVAC by 17 February 2005. Address details are given at the end of the questionnaire.

All returned questionnaires will be treated in the strictest confidence by UVAC and individual responses will not be disclosed or attributed.

Thank you for your support.

<b>1</b>	<b>Admissions data</b>		
	Did your institution specifically record the total number of former Apprentices and NVQ Level 3 learners entering your undergraduate programmes in 2003-04 and/or 2004-05?		X for NO Apprentices and complete Q1
			X for YES Apprentices and go to Q2 Total number:
			X for NO NVQs and complete Q1
			X for YES NVQs and go to Q2 Total number:
	<b>For what reasons are these records not kept?</b>		
	Admission decisions are devolved to individual tutors or departments		<b>X relevant response</b>
	No requirement to keep them		
	Do not believe it would affect institutional policy on admissions		
	Would require too complex a change to our recording system (e.g. software limitations)		
Not our policy to admit Apprentices or Level 3 NVQ holders			
Others. Please state			

<b>2</b>	<b>Barriers faced by Apprentices in their entry to HE programmes</b>	<b>Please X here for YES</b>	<b>Please X here for NO</b>
	Are there admissions barriers faced by Apprentices at your institution?		
	<b>If YES, please indicate from your experience:</b>		
	• Lack of knowledge of Apprenticeship among admissions staff		
	• Lack of knowledge of Apprenticeship among academic staff		
	• We don't have the right programmes for them		
	• They are not ready for HE ways of learning		
	• They are deficient in essential knowledge		
	• They are deficient in essential skills		
	• We are uncertain about the standard of the Apprenticeship		
	• Previous Apprentices entering our institution encountered problems, high drop out rates etc.		
	• Others. Please state.		

<b>3</b>	<b>Overcoming barriers to the admission of Apprentices to HE programmes</b>	<b>Please X here for YES</b>	<b>Please X here for NO</b>
	Do you employ special processes to overcome barriers to entry for Apprentices?		
	<b>If YES, please indicate from your experience:</b>		
	• We have changed our curriculum to help them		
	• We give explicit credit for work experience		
	• Make allowances for different learning styles		
	• Extra tuition in programme materials		
	• Extra guidance on learning-skills		
	• Extra pastoral or tutorial support		
• Administrative support			
• Others. Please state.			

<b>4</b>	<b>Who in your organisation is responsible for assessing and advising on admission of Apprentices and vocational learners into higher education?</b>	<b>Please X as appropriate</b>
	Institution's central admission service or office	
	Bought-in advisory service	
	Normal admissions tutors	
	Individual members of teaching or training staff	
	Don't know	
	Committee with members from local "feeder" organisations	
	Others. Please state	

<b>5</b>	<b>Are there examples of good data and/or management practice that you are willing to provide in a face-to-face meeting or by post?</b>	<b>Please X as appropriate</b>	
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Later</b>
	Targeting recruitment of Apprentices and vocational learners to higher education		
	Recording entry qualifications and Apprentice frameworks when present and offered		
	Recording previous vocational programme or subject in detail		
	Recording social, environmental and disability status at entry to higher education		
	Others: please state		

6	Other agencies with interest in the admission process for Apprentices?	Please X as appropriate		
		Yes, now	Yes, later	Not really
	Would you value help from external agencies in making admission decisions on Apprentices?			
	<b>If YES, which of the following could develop appropriate systems, in your view?</b>			
	• UVAC			
	• Sector Skills Councils			
	• Learning & Skills Development Agency			
	• Lifelong Learning Networks			
	• Major local employers			
	• Business organisations such as Chamber of Commerce			
	• Others: please state			

Please use the following space to make any further observations or comment.

Name of person submitting this questionnaire		
Role or title within institution		
Name of institution		
Address		
Telephone		
Email address		
May UVAC contact you again about your responses?	X here for YES	X here for NO

All responses to this questionnaire are confidential to UVAC and the respondent.  
No names, data or other information will be attributable or identifiable in the report

## 10.5 Annex Higher education institutions responding to either the questionnaire or to later telephone enquiries

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Anglia Polytechnic University	London South Bank University	University College Winchester
Aston University	Loughborough University	University College Worcester
Bath Spa University College	Manchester Metropolitan University	University of Bath
Bournemouth University	Middlesex University	University of Birmingham
Brunel University	Northumbria University	University of Bolton
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College	Nottingham Trent University	University of Bradford
Canterbury Christ Church University College	Oxford Brookes University	University of Brighton
City University London	Queen Mary, University of London	University of Bristol
De Montfort University	Roehampton University	University of Buckingham
Harper Adams University College	Royal Holloway, University of London	University of Cambridge
Keele University	Sheffield Hallam University	University of Central England
Kingston University	Staffordshire University	University of Central Lancashire
Lancaster University	Thames Valley University	University of Derby
Leeds Metropolitan University	University College Chester	University of Durham
Liverpool Hope University College	University College Chichester	University of Salford
Liverpool John Moores University	University College London	University of Teesside
London Metropolitan University	University College Northampton	

## 10.6 Annex      Recent good practice in promoting Advanced Apprenticeship progression to Foundation Degrees

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### **Consultancy: David Hemsworth & Associates**

- 1**      Case study: Developing a work-based learning Foundation Degree in Therapies and Spa Management, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
- 2**      Case study: A professional association perspective, Professional Golfers' Association
- 3**      Case study: Progression to Foundation Degree in Sport & Leisure Management, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
- 4**      Case study: Progression to Foundation Degree in Health-related Exercise and Fitness, Leeds Metropolitan University
- 5**      Case study: Integrated Apprenticeship and Foundation Degree in Computing and Internet Technology, Yeovil College
- 6**      Case study: Progression to Foundation Degree in ICT Support, Gateshead College
- 7**      Case study: Progression to Foundation Degree in Computer Networking, Management Manchester College of Arts and Technology

In addition, the following document and process was developed during the timetable for this investigation:

An Invitation to Collaborate in the Delivery of a Kingston University Construction Foundation Degree

## UVAC Publications

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All downloadable at [www.uvac.ac.uk](http://www.uvac.ac.uk).

**From Apprenticeship to Higher Education:** A guide to developing work-based progression routes to higher education for Advanced Apprentices and other skilled staff and managers  
by Adrian Anderson and David Hemsworth, 2005.

**Integrating Work Based Learning into Higher Education: A Guide to Good Practice**  
by Lyn Brennan, 2005.

**Learner Progression into Higher Education:** Key issues concerning learner progression through the vocational qualifications system  
by Bob Faithorn, 2005.

**A higher education context for National Occupational Standards**  
by Stephen Swailes, 2004.

**Bridging rhetoric and reality: Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) in the UK**  
by Jonathan Garnett, Derek Portwood and Carol Costley, 2004.

**Fit for Purpose – The use of National Occupational Standards in higher education to meet the needs of employment**  
A generic guide for curriculum designer and deliverers by Simon Roodhouse and David Hemsworth, 2004.

**APEL National Forum, London: Recognising workplace learning and achievement as a tool to enhance the delivery of Foundation Degrees.** Summary of proceedings, 2004.

**APEL National Forum, Cardiff: Recognising workplace learning and achievement as a tool to enhance the delivery of Foundation Degrees.** Summary of proceedings, 2004.

**Apprenticeship: An historical re-invention for a post industrial world**  
Proceedings of the conference held by UVAC, 2004.

**Responding to Government expectations: Vocational education and training**  
UVAC Annual Conference Proceedings, 2003. Published 2004.

**Widening participation in the workplace: A new agenda for further and higher education**  
UVAC Annual Conference Proceedings, 2002. Published 2004.

**Accreditation and recognition of Graduate Apprenticeships**  
Meeting National Industry and Education Standards, 2003.

**Accreditation and recognition of Foundation degrees**  
Meeting National Industry and Education Standards, 2003.

**Senior Awards – The basics**  
With City & Guilds, 2003.

**Review and development of Graduate Apprenticeship:**  
A National Higher Education and Employment Bridging Programme, 2003.

**A quick guide to National Occupational Standards, National Vocational Qualifications and Apprenticeships as routes to higher education, 2002.**

**For further information, please contact:**

University Vocational Awards Council  
University of Bolton  
Chadwick Campus  
Chadwick Street  
BOLTON BL2 1JW

Tel: 01204 903351

Fax: 01204 903354

Email: [uvac@uvac.ac.uk](mailto:uvac@uvac.ac.uk)

Website: [www.uvac.ac.uk](http://www.uvac.ac.uk)

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