

Review and Development of Graduate Apprenticeship

**A National Higher Education and
Employment Bridging Programme**

UNIVERSITY VOCATIONAL AWARDS COUNCIL

Review and Development of Graduate Apprenticeship

A National Higher Education and
Employment Bridging Programme

Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction	7
Chapter 1 Roles and Responsibilities	8
Chapter 2 Equal Opportunities	15
Chapter 3 Evaluation of GA Pilot Projects – Summary Report	17
Chapter 4 The Contribution of Key Skills to the GA Framework	20
Chapter 5 NVQs and National Occupational Standards	21
Chapter 6 Case Studies	24
Chapter 7 Accreditation	30
Chapter 8 Action Required for Sustaining Graduate Apprenticeships	33

Foreword

Graduate Apprenticeships, a response to graduate employability and employer engagement with higher education in England, are increasingly seen as the national bridging programme into work for industry and service sectors such as sports and recreation, engineering, telecommunications and e-skills.

Over 29 frameworks are now in place covering a spectrum of industry and service sector activity including childcare, pharmaceuticals, culture, construction, print and publishing and land-based industries, with around 50 higher education institutions involved. In the case of engineering, telecommunications and e-skills there are over 900 registered Graduate Apprentices.

The schemes were started in 1999, with pilot funding from the Department of Education and Employment (now-Department for Education and Skills) and continued to be rolled out over the next two years. Thereafter recurrent funds were available for GA students as part of Hefce's mainstream funding for institutions. What makes these schemes of particular interest is the direct involvement of employer-led National Training Organisations (now Sector Skills Councils) with higher education in designing and delivering programmes which meet employer and skills needs whilst recognising the constraints placed on those responsible for delivering the programmes.

The programmes have been designed to be flexible with a variety of routes to employment, or for those in employment wishing to accelerate their learning to progress in their company. Full and part-time routes are available and the effective use of work placements, key skills, National Occupational Standards and National Vocational Qualifications have led to a unique combination of qualifications including an honours degree.

This booklet is intended to bring together in a single publication the experience to date of Graduate Apprenticeships, including case studies on the benefits of the initiative and information for those considering setting up and delivering a Graduate Apprenticeship scheme.

Professor Simon Roodhouse
Chief Operating Officer
University Vocational Awards Council

October 2003

Acknowledgements

This compilation of papers derived from the Graduate Apprenticeship National Network is largely the work of: Adrian Anderson (Anderson Associates); Peter-Burke, CDELL, University of Nottingham; David-Hemsworth (David Hemsworth & Associates); and Simon-Roodhouse, Chief Operating Officer, University Vocational Awards Council. Jean Durham and Julie Perkins should also be acknowledged for their contribution to the production of this booklet. None of this would be possible without the financial support of the DfES and Hefce who have been ably represented by Philip Brewins and Amy Kean. This report was produced as part of the Hefce-funded 2002/2003 Graduate Apprenticeship Support Programme managed by Adrian Anderson of Anderson Associates. Finally, we would like to thank the Learning and Skills Council for sponsoring the publication, print and distribution of this report.

UVAC 2003

ISBN: 0907 311 083

© Hefce 2003

This report has been reproduced with the kind permission of Hefce. The report was originally produced by UVAC/Anderson Associates as part of the 2002/3 Hefce-funded Graduate Apprenticeship Support Programme. The publication, print and distribution of the report were kindly sponsored by the LSC.

Introduction

Graduate Apprenticeship was announced by the Department for Education and Employment (now DfES) in the-1998 Learning Age green paper. The aim of Graduate Apprenticeship is to enhance the 'employment skills' of HE students and graduates by combining an honours or postgraduate degree with work-based learning, underpinned by National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) or National Occupational Standards (NOS) and key-skills units. To do this 50 HEIs and approximately 30 SSCs/former NTOs together with employers have developed Graduate Apprenticeship learning frameworks specifically designed to raise the skill levels of undergraduates and graduate entrants.

A Graduate Apprenticeship offers:

- a nationally-recognised development route incorporating an honours degree or postgraduate degree, NVQ/ NOS and key skills
- an integrated, modular plan for the development of vocational and employability skills
- practical training leading to the achievement of an NVQ or approved training based on National-Occupational-Standards
- coaching in key skills such as Communication, Application of Number and IT
- a motivational programme to attract the best graduates and make them effective more quickly.

“Graduate Apprenticeships are an excellent example of how businesses and higher education institutions can-work-together. Combining work-based learning with an honours degree creates a win-win situation which-develops the skills of graduates and meets the needs of employers.

“We are working closely with the Higher Education Funding Council for England to ensure that work-related skills become a more intrinsic part of higher education. This will enable us to build upon what has already been-achieved through Graduate Apprenticeships and the new Foundation Degrees.”

Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Lifelong Learning and Higher Education Minister, January 2002

Advice on the development and implementation of Graduate Apprenticeship was provided in the development phase to the DfES and Hefce by the Graduate Apprenticeship National Steering Group. The steering group was chaired by Professor Derek Fraser, Vice Chancellor of the University of Teesside and included representation from Hefce, QAA, DfES, UVAC, NTO National Council, former NTOs and HEIs.

Chapter 1

Roles and Responsibilities

This chapter outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of organisations involved in Graduate Apprenticeship and the overall operation of the Graduate Apprenticeship system originally developed by the DfES. Additionally, it identifies contact points where further information, advice and support on particular issues-can be obtained.

Principles for Development and Delivery – In designing and delivering Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks SSCs/former NTOs, HEIs and their partners should focus on maximising the benefits of the initiative to individual-learners and employers.

For the Individual Learner, Graduate Apprenticeship should:

- Enhance employability through the acquisition of vocational skills, key skills and an honours or postgraduate-degree
- Enable individuals to maximise the benefits of work placements
- Support individuals in obtaining the jobs and careers they want and which match their skills and potential
- Support access to higher education for non-traditional learners in general and Modern Apprentices in-particular
- Support individuals in obtaining sponsorship from employers to contribute to tuition fees and other costs associated with higher education.

For the Employer, Graduate Apprenticeship should:

- Enable individuals to obtain the vocational and key skills employers require
- Enable employers to influence the design and delivery of higher education provision
- Support employers in recruiting and training undergraduates and postgraduates for roles where skills shortages are apparent.

For the SSC/former NTO, Graduate Apprenticeship should be used to develop the responsiveness of higher education at honours and postgraduate levels to sector skills needs and to enhance the employability of graduates and postgraduates entering their industries.

For the HEI, Graduate Apprenticeship should be used to enhance graduate employability, contribute to first destination statistics, open access to non-traditional entrants (particularly Modern Apprentices) and increase the responsiveness of provision to defined sector, regional and local skills needs.

National Steerage

The development and implementation of Graduate Apprenticeship was steered by the Graduate Apprenticeship National Steering Group (GANSNG). GANSNG was responsible for advising DfES and Hefce on the future development of Graduate Apprenticeship and had representatives drawn from the DfES, Hefce, UUK, UVAC, NTO-National Council, SSCs/former NTOs and HEIs. The position of the DfES has been explained thus:

The Department contributed £20,000 to each of ten NTO-led pilot projects running between 1998–2000. A small number of other NTOs also received limited amounts of-Departmental funding to develop GA-frameworks for their sectors during 2000.

In addition, £5m was made available for Graduate Apprenticeships via HEFCE (over two years starting in September 2000). As a result GA-related activity was supported at 50 HE institutions (HEIs) in conjunction with-their NTO partners. This support was for fee remission for employees in SMEs, who studied part-time in-HE on a GA programme.

There are no plans to fund the development of further GA frameworks. Government policy-has always been to-provide initial funding on a pump priming basis with the intention of enabling HEI/SSC (formerly NTO) partnerships to put in place self-sustaining arrangements for future delivery.

However, we will continue to promote the concept of Graduate Apprenticeships by-mainstreaming GAs with other employability activities being undertaken by the Department. This approach will bring together a range of-innovative approaches to enhance HE study and work related learning, as well as spreading good practice.

DfES, HE: QED, October 2002

Graduate Apprenticeship Framework Development Partnerships

The formation of effective partnership is essential to the development and implementation of strong partnerships. At the centre of the partnership will be the SSC/former NTO (representing employers), sector employers and related bodies (eg. trade associations and trade unions) and HEIs. To develop, review and maintain the Graduate Apprenticeship framework the SSC/former NTO should establish a steering group. The-HEIs piloting the framework should be represented on the steering group, as should a representative of-those HEIs expressing an interest in using the framework. Consideration should also be given to involving the-following organisations in framework development partnerships:

- **LSC/local LSCs.** The SSC/former NTO should consult the local LSC where the Graduate Apprenticeship will-initially be delivered. Issues such as supporting progression by non-traditional entrants (particularly Modern Apprentices), link to local skills needs and delivery and partnerships with further education colleges,-training providers and Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) will need to be considered.
- **Regional Development Agencies.** An RDA should be involved where the delivery of a Graduate Apprenticeship framework is seen as making a significant contribution to the delivery of skills identified as-important for regional prosperity.
- **Further Education Colleges/training providers.** This will particularly be the case where FECs/training providers/ CoVEs will support the delivery of training required to obtain the NVQ/NVQ units specified in the-framework or-to-support assessment and verification.
- **Awarding Bodies.** In the development of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework the SSC/former NTO and-HEIs-concerned should explore with appropriate awarding bodies arrangements for assessing and certifying NVQs, NVQ units and key skills.
- **Other Organisations with a Particular Interest in the Framework.** This will depend on sector circumstances-but could include the DTI, DEFRA, professional bodies etc. Additionally, although Graduate Apprenticeship is-an-‘England-only’ initiative, SSCs/former NTOs may wish to consult with partners from Scotland, Wales and-Northern Ireland and consider how a Graduate Apprenticeship-type approach may be-implemented in the-context of the circumstances and needs of other parts of the United Kingdom.

In addition to the framework steering group, the SSC/former NTO will wish to consult widely with sector employers (including SMEs and micro-businesses) and a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the framework is appropriate for sector needs.

Graduate Apprenticeship Framework Delivery Partnerships

Once developed by an SSC/former NTO, frameworks are available for delivery by individual HEIs. Although ‘frameworks’ will be national products and only one framework will exist for a sector/sub-sector, there will-be-scope for considerable flexibility in local delivery. Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks delivered by-individual HEIs are known as Graduate Apprenticeship schemes. Flexibility will ensure frameworks are delivered-in accordance with local circumstances and enable the HEI to apply its own expertise and innovate. It-is, however, critically important that the national Graduate Apprenticeship brand is retained and that the-framework is delivered in accordance with the needs of the sector. The use of the UVAC Graduate Apprenticeship Quality Marking initiative by HEIs and SSCs/former NTOs will ensure that the appropriate balance-between local flexibility and innovation and national consistency is achieved.

Graduate Apprenticeship Development Funding

SSCs/former NTOs should seek support for their role in the development and implementation of Graduate Apprenticeship from the SSDA. Crucially, SSCs/former NTOs should also seek contributions from employers towards the cost of-framework development and delivery. At the least this should include a contribution in employer time in advising on the development of an appropriate sector framework. We would, however, hope that employers would also consider contributing to other development activities, for example sponsoring framework guides for-HEIs and potential learners or promotional materials. Additionally, HEI and SSC/former NTO partnerships are-encouraged to work closely with RDAs and local LSCs in the development and implementation of Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks and where appropriate seek their financial support (this could include local LSC initiative funding, European Social Funds or RDA funding). Finally, SSCs/former NTOs will also wish to inform their sponsor government department (eg. DTI, DEFRA) and identify how Graduate Apprenticeship can enhance sector productivity and competitiveness and contribute to government objectives.

Graduate Apprenticeship Delivery Funding

In some cases, particularly where a sector is a local priority, local Learning and Skills Councils may be willing to-contribute to NVQ/Key Skills registration, learning and assessment costs. They may also be interested in working with the HEI and SSC/former NTO to develop partnerships with further education colleges/CoVEs and-progression routes from Modern Apprenticeship to Graduate Apprenticeship. Employers should also be encouraged to contribute to the delivery of Graduate Apprenticeship. This could well include contributions to work-based training, NVQ/NVQ unit and Key Skills registration and certification costs. Additionally, to support recruitment employers may wish to sponsor individual learners and contribute to the cost of tuition fees. The-position is explained more fully as follows:

1. HEFCE circular letter 22/00 states: ‘Funds to develop and deliver Graduate Apprenticeships’ set out the funding arrangements for Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs). Following some initial pilots funded by the then DfEE, the Government made available £5 million during 2000–01 and 2001–02 to pump-prime the initiative. HEFCE administered these funds on behalf of the DfES, as follows:
 - Providing fee remission for part-time students employed in SMEs, to participate in higher education courses which also allow them to complete a GA. This was available to eligible students starting a-GA-in-either 2000–01 or 2001–02.
 - Development funds for institutions, working with NTO partners, to development GA frameworks. The allocations were announced in HEFCE 01/41 ‘Graduate Apprenticeships: funding allocations 2001–02’.
2. Recurrent funds for teaching GAs have since their introduction been provided through the standard HEFCE funding method for teaching. Institutions have also, since September 2000, been eligible to bid for additional student numbers (ASNs) for GAs, as for any other HE provision.
3. The fee remission funds were made available only to those students that were claimed for in 2000–01 and-2001–02, and who continue to be eligible in 2002–03. This has now been allocated and paid to each relevant institution and fee remission will not be offered to any new GA students. Where the original amount of students claimed for was greater than the amount of students that started the course, these funds will be clawed back accordingly, and institutions notified.

Framework Development and Revision

Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks should be developed by SSCs/former NTOs in partnership with HEIs. The SSC/former NTO has responsibility for ensuring the framework meets skills needs identified in the sector's Skills Foresight/LMI studies and sector workforce development plans and that employers are appropriately involved and consulted in the framework development process. As a national initiative only one framework should be developed for the sector or sub-sector. To avoid a proliferation of frameworks SSCs/former NTOs are also advised to develop where possible a single sector framework with sub-sector options. SSCs/former NTOs should additionally engage employers and employment interests (trade associations and trade unions) in the framework development process. During framework development the SSC/former NTO and HEI should consult the RDA and local LSC where the Graduate Apprenticeship is to be delivered. The SSC/former NTO should identify whether and how the Graduate Apprenticeship framework will contribute to regional skills and workforce development priorities. Similarly, the SSC/former NTO should liaise with the local Learning and Skills Council to determine how the delivery of a framework may contribute to local workforce development objectives. The local LSC may also be able to work with the HEI to support Modern Apprentices in progressing to Graduate Apprenticeship.

Framework Approval

Framework approval rests with the Sector Skills Council/former NTO and it is strongly recommended that all schemes are quality-marked by UVAC.

Graduate Apprenticeship Marketing and Promotion

SSCs/former NTOs have a responsibility to promote the existence of a Graduate Apprenticeship in their sector (sector promotion should cover employers, trade associations, trade unions and current employees, eg. Modern Apprentices etc). They should do this to facilitate the availability of work placements, publication of employment opportunities for Graduate Apprentices and promotion of Graduate Apprenticeships to Modern Apprentices and work-based learners. HEIs will wish to publish the availability of Graduate Apprenticeship to existing and potential students. They may also wish, subject to the suitability of the Graduate Apprenticeship, to promote its availability to local Modern Apprentices, working closely with a local Learning and Skills Council.

Graduate Apprenticeship Delivery

The effective delivery of Graduate Apprenticeship will require a partnership approach. The honours degree or postgraduate degree will be delivered by the HEI or through an HEI/FEC partnership. The delivery of key skills and NVQ or NVQ units will involve a partnership approach between the HEI, employer, awarding body and, potentially, the SSC/former NTO and FEC or training provider (this could also involve a CoVE).

Assessment, Verification and Certification of NVQs, NVQ Units and Key Skills

For guidance on key skills delivery and assessment, see the CDELL website at www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/cdell for further details. The LSDA also manages a Key Skills Support Programme; although this is aimed at the school and further education sector, support materials and good practice case studies may also be of interest to HEIs delivering Graduate Apprenticeship.

Graduate Apprenticeship Framework Certification

To reinforce the value of Graduate Apprenticeship and mark the achievement of the individual learner, a Graduate Apprenticeship completion certificate should be awarded on completion of the framework. The certificate should be awarded by the SSC/former NTO responsible for the framework in conjunction with the HEI. Where appropriate Graduate Apprenticeship certificates should be awarded at degree ceremonies and achievement publicised by the HEI, SSC/former NTO and other partners (eg. RDA and local LSC as appropriate).

Graduate Apprenticeship Evaluation

Prior to the end of the three-year licensing period for Graduate Apprenticeship framework, the SSC/former NTO should undertake an evaluation of the framework. This should involve evaluating the impact of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework on addressing sector skills requirements and consideration of any revisions and amendments needed. In the context of the UVAC Quality Marking criteria the the SSC/former NTO should also review the delivery of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework.

Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion

In the design of Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks SSCs/former NTOs should ensure they appropriately consider equality of opportunity and social inclusion. SSCs/former NTOs may wish to use the *Quality Matters: NTOs and Equal Opportunities Code of Practice and Good Practice Guide* produced by NTO National Council in-April 2000. It would also be advisable to refer to the QAA for further information on equal opportunities and social inclusion issues.

Progression and Access

In both the design and delivery of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework the SSC/former NTO and HEI should consider how Advanced Modern Apprentices could be encouraged and supported to progress to a Graduate Apprenticeship. This will require the SSC/former NTO to consider APEL issues in the design of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework. Similarly, if the HEI is developing or delivering a Foundation Degree in the same or-similar vocational area issues surrounding progression to Graduate Apprenticeship should be explored. At-a-local level the development of partnerships with CoVEs to support both progression and delivery could well-be worth exploration.

Respective Roles of Organisations in Graduate Apprenticeship

DfES: Graduate Apprenticeship policy direction and national steerage.

Hefce: Funding of Graduate Apprenticeship delivery through the ASN system. Monitoring of Graduate Apprenticeship delivery.

University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC): Management of the Graduate Apprenticeship Directory and Graduate Apprenticeship Quality Marking Scheme. Advice on the overall operation of Graduate Apprenticeship, including development, funding, certification and delivery.

Contact: Julie Perkins

Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA): Funding and assessment of the SSC/former NTO role. Source-of-Labour Market Intelligence that could be of value in planning Graduate Apprenticeship provision.

Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA): Can provide advice on the operation of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and potentially the delivery and assessment of key skills.

Learning and Skills Council (LSC/local LSCs): SSCs/former NTOs and HEIs may find it appropriate to contact local LSCs where frameworks will be delivered and identify how delivery relates to local skills priorities. LSCs could potentially support the delivery of NVQs/NVQ units and key skills specified in frameworks. They may also wish to support the development of local partnerships aimed at encouraging progression from Modern Apprenticeship to Graduate Apprenticeship.

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs): As with local LSCs, SSCs/former NTOs and HEIs may find it appropriate to identify how a Graduate Apprenticeship could support the delivery of RDA skills priorities. RDAs may also agree to support the development of Graduate Apprenticeship where this supports regional skills priorities.

FECs/training providers: Depending on the nature of the partnership, support for the delivery of the degree and-NVQ, key skills components of frameworks. FECs/training providers may also support HEIs in engaging employers in the delivery of frameworks.

HEIs: Co-ordination of the delivery of the Graduate Apprenticeship, supporting learners and employers, promoting the Graduate Apprenticeship to potential learners and employers.

SSCs/former NTOs: Responsible for developing, monitoring and revising Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks; will support HEIs in implementing frameworks, promoting Graduate Apprenticeship and issuing Graduate Apprenticeship completion certificates.

Chapter 2

Equal Opportunities

This chapter was originally developed as part of the former NTO National Council and UVAC 2001/2003 Graduate Apprenticeship Support Programme. It is focused on the development of Graduate Apprenticeship as-an initiative that promotes equality of opportunity and social inclusion.

There is extensive coverage of the subject of equality of opportunity in the publications *Promoting Equal Opportunities in Modern Apprenticeships: A Guide to Good Practice* and *NTOs and Equal Opportunities* prepared by NTO National Council as part of its 'Quality Matters' series. This work should be built on forming a-view of how to tackle equal opportunities and social inclusion from the Graduate Apprenticeship perspective. The contents of these publications have been used as a basis for the key points listed below.

Key points

■ An industry relevant equal opportunities policy statement, which can be used as a basis for discussion with employers

Aspects of the design and delivery of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework may affect how employers recruit and develop their graduate employees. It would be considered good practice if frameworks included an equal opportunities policy statement outlining the aims and objectives in relation to equality of opportunity, and drawing on relevant legislation and codes of practice which could be discussed with employers interested in offering Graduate Apprenticeship opportunities.

Example statement: LANTRA

The Graduate Apprenticeship for the land-based industries is open to all people regardless of gender, race,-or disability (where disability is not a barrier to doing the job). It is aimed at people of all ages, including career changers.

Employers and training providers must ensure that all promotional, recruitment and training activities are-free from overt or covert discrimination against individuals or groups and that they comply with legislation relating to sex discrimination, race relations and disability discrimination.

Physical disability may be a legitimate barrier to employment in some sectors of the industry where physical-stamina and mobility are required. However, there are opportunities for people with a physical-disability to function competently in other areas and care should be taken to ensure that unfair-discrimination does not occur.

■ Clear articulation of employer responsibilities

Within the framework there should be a clear statement of the expectation of the employer. For example:

The employer agrees to:

- take overall responsibility for the apprentice's work and learning for the duration of the work experience or-employment
- ensure a safe and healthy work environment and comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act
- agree and regularly update a Learning Agreement with the apprentice and provider(s)
- provide the experience, learning and support necessary for the apprentice to achieve the outcomes of-the-Learning Agreement
- identify an individual who will act as the primary contact for the apprentice
- ensure adherence to Equal Opportunities principles.

■ Careers guidance that tackles stereotyping

Good work has already been undertaken to tackle the issue of stereotyping with regard to Modern Apprentices – for example many SSCs and former NTOs have promoted the business case for diversity and provided specific tools to help improve good practice on the ground. Case studies within the Guide to Good Practice in-Modern Apprenticeships highlight approaches that could be adopted, some of which could be used to address careers guidance for Graduate Apprenticeships.

■ Well-developed provider, partner and employer relationships, focused clearly on the importance of equality of opportunity

In planning to address equal opportunities on the Graduate Apprenticeship programme, it will be important to develop actions in partnership with other key stakeholders. The success of the pilot Graduate Apprenticeship programme run by the former Chemical Manufacturing and Processing NTO relied heavily upon the relationship established between the University and employers in the region. Through this partnership the students' needs were clearly identified and appropriate placements made with employers, already supportive of the aims of the initiative.

In addition the CITB and HABIA have conducted some interesting work with regard to the Modern Apprenticeship and these principles could usefully be adopted in the development of Graduate Apprenticeship.

Examples:**1. CITB**

The CITB worked in partnership with an employer in Scotland who had previously only employed boys from school and who was committed to recruiting a 'class of girl joiners' in 2002. The partnership work involved offering a taster programme prior to career choice at school and then linked girls wanting to enter the sector into an SVQ programme at school.

2. HABIA (Hairdressing And Beauty Industry Authority)

The NTO's research into dyslexia in the sector identified that 7.9 per cent of employees were identified as having dyslexia. However, less than 20 per cent of centres were using an assessment test that could identify levels of dyslexia among trainees. The research led the NTO, in partnership with the Adult Dyslexia Organisation and British Dyslexia Association, to develop guidance materials and run training events for training providers in the sector to raise awareness and improve practice in identifying and supporting the needs of trainees with dyslexia.

Chapter 3

Evaluation of GA Pilot Projects – Summary Report

The formal evaluation of Phases 1 and 2 of the Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) Pilot Projects was carried out by the Centre for Developing and Evaluating Lifelong Learning (CDELL) in the School of Education at the University of Nottingham on behalf of the DfES (then DfEE).

CDELL was contracted by the DfEE to evaluate the seven first round Graduate Apprenticeship Pilot Projects in February 1999, and submitted the final Evaluation Report in April 2000. Subsequently, DfEE funded a second round of projects, and CDELL was again contracted to conduct the evaluation. The Summary Report describes the **generic outcomes** of the evaluation that were contained in the full Evaluation Report that was presented to the now DfES in July 2001.

The Second Round Projects fell into three categories.

1. Continuation Projects

The DfEE agreed to provide continuation funding for three of the first round projects. These were:

- Steel and Metal Industry NTO Project
- SPRITO Project
- e-skills NTO Project.

2. Diplomat Projects

Funding was also provided for three projects that were intended to establish a Graduate Apprenticeship framework for students working at sub-degree level (eg. those on HND programmes) and targeted specifically at small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs). These projects were:

- Council for Administration Diplomat Project
- Local Government NTO Diplomat Project
- e-skills NTO Diplomat Project.

3. Additional Projects

The final category comprised two new projects, funded by DfEE in order to investigate alternative models for-the Graduate Apprenticeship. These projects, which were conducted on a collaborative basis, were:

- East Midlands Development Agency Project
- University of Derby Project.

It should be noted that during the course of the projects two initiatives were introduced by DfEE that were to-have a significant impact upon the whole Graduate Apprenticeship strategy. First came the launch of the Foundation Degree programme, that will take on the mantle originally intended for the Graduate Apprenticeship Diplomats framework. Secondly, the Higher Education Funding Council announcement in September 2000 of-“*funds to develop and deliver Graduate Apprenticeships*” resulted in applications from more than 50 HEIs, some of which opted to work with NTOs, such as the e-skills NTO, that already had an established framework from their involvement in the first round of the Graduate Apprenticeship Pilot Projects.

To some extent, therefore, the second round projects were overtaken by events, although that is not to say that important lessons did not emerge that would help NTOs, HEIs and employers in setting up their own frameworks in the future.

Generic Outcomes

In conducting the evaluation of the individual projects, the CDELL team identified a number of issues that do not appear to be sector-specific. These are described in the following paragraphs.

Sustainability post-funding was a matter of particular concern that the DfEE wished the projects to investigate, and several delivery models were identified. The most likely to be adopted by HEIs as sustainable models were:

- integration of the Graduate Apprenticeship within full-time degree programmes
- integration of the Graduate Apprenticeship within part-time degree programmes
- postgraduate certificate/part-time course towards achievement of Graduate Apprenticeship outcomes.

These delivery models will enable an HEI to draw down funds to help offset the costs involved in co-ordination and quality assurance of the programme. In addition, it ensures that the student is kept in contact with the HEI for mentoring purposes, which is thought to be crucial to increase success rates.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that all partners involved (SSCs/former NTOs, HEIs and FE colleges) recognise the importance of the workplace and the employers' role in creating a work-based learning environment. The failure to fully engage the interest and involvement of employers is a particular worry, as without their co-operation it will be difficult to persuade them of the value of the Graduate Apprenticeship concept, which may in-turn reflect badly on the recruitment of potential candidates in the future. The early stages of a Graduate Apprenticeship project are especially crucial in engaging employers fully, so that the Graduate Apprenticeship process is not regarded merely as students on placement but as employees working to benefit both themselves and the organisation. There is a danger that HEIs will try to deliver a Graduate Apprenticeship package to employers rather than fully involving them in all aspects of development. The extent of promotional and marketing work to encourage employers to become involved cannot be underestimated.

A properly constituted Graduate Apprenticeship Steering Group is a vital support mechanism for the HEIs involved in delivery of the framework, as it provides them with the opportunity to share delivery ideas, and to resolve problems about administration, quality assurance and funding. It is, however, important for members to recognise the need for regular attendance at Steering Group meetings, something that has been lacking in one or two of the pilot and second round projects.

It will be difficult to gauge the impact of the Graduate Apprenticeship until employers have been engaged on these projects for some little time. There is also a feeling that unless funding can be drawn down by HEIs or FE colleges to pay for the vocational training aspects, employers may not want to pay for the Graduate Apprenticeship and would perhaps prefer to recruit Modern Apprentices where funding is available. If Graduate Apprenticeship funding can be confirmed then it is likely to become very popular, especially with employees who wish to undertake a degree, or who may have recently graduated and need vocational training to progress their career.

A major area of concern has been the procedures and costs of obtaining accreditation for the key skills and NVQ units, both of which are mandatory components of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework. The normal assessment and verification procedures applied by awarding bodies do not fit neatly into the contexts in which most Graduate Apprenticeship programmes will be delivered, particularly when they can select the NVQ units on a pick-and-mix basis, such as with the e-skills NTO framework. In that particular project, a solution was found by adding National Occupational Standards to the framework as an alternative to the NVQ units, with arrangements for verification of these standards made through three separate awarding bodies.

In the case of a regional project, such as that trialled by the EMDA model, it became apparent that as well as working closely with NTOs, it was vital also to enrol the full support of regional employer forums, as they were most likely to open up a much more direct route into placement opportunities for the Graduate Apprentices.

The timescale in which funded projects such as these are expected to deliver their planned outcomes has once-again been highlighted. Experience demonstrates that the projects of this nature rarely if ever get off to-a-prompt start – for a wide variety of reasons – and their progress when they do get underway is often hampered by circumstances outside their control. It is appreciated that funding can never be guaranteed year-on-year, but it would be helpful if there was some realistic limit placed upon the planned outcomes that-would enable a project to direct its energies towards the key issues.

Finally, the title “Graduate Apprentice” is still not well liked and has too many connotations steeped in the very-different history of the separate words, and it is felt that DfES should agree on a terminology that best characterises the distinctive nature of a Graduate Apprenticeship programme. At present, there is a suggestion that the term Graduate Apprentice may actually deter employers and potential candidates from taking advantage of the opportunities it offers. DfES may wish to review this matter before embarking on the national marketing of-the concept that all NTOs and HEIs agree is now vital in order to establish the concept at national level.

Chapter 4

The Contribution of Key Skills to the GA Framework

Key skills are perhaps one of the least well-understood elements of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework. Although they are a mandatory component, it is often taken for granted that students in higher education will-develop the skills as a matter of course. Yet research undertaken by CDELL on behalf of DfEE would suggest that this is far from being the case (*Key Skills of Students Entering Higher Education*, DfEE, 1997). Some of the central issues relating to the place of key skills are addressed below:

It is asserted that the key skills are embedded in higher education programmes. This may well be true, but they are usually embedded to the point where they have disappeared from view. Students can be unaware of key skills, and of the fact that they may or may not be developing them. Lecturers may fail to-give prominence to them, so that in the end their presence is ignored or goes unnoticed.

Allied to the above point is the fact that the definition of what constitutes key skills can vary widely both-within and between universities, and where they are said to be 'embedded' there may be no clear definition at all. This is one reason why the Graduate Apprenticeship framework adopts the QCA version of key skills, which despite the debate aroused among HE tutors about their supposed vocational slant, do have national recognition and can lead to a nationally accredited award.

As students begin to arrive at university in possession of a Key Skills Qualification gained as part of their-16–18 studies, or within a Modern Apprenticeship or NVQ, it may be assumed by them and their tutors that there is no need to devote further attention to key skills. Yet there is the whole question of *progression* to be considered. The QCA Key Skills are defined at five levels, and there is every reason to-expect that students might enhance the level of their competence within their HE programmes.

There is no single way for the effective delivery of key skills, and a variety of approaches may be required according to the HE programme and the confidence and experience of the tutors. Key skills are-typically delivered via a combination of the following approaches:

- **Integrated**, so that the evidence of key skills competence is obtained as part of a student's normal-degree work programme
- **Bolt-on**, whereby key skills are delivered as a separate element of the programme, with special activities and assignments to generate evidence
- **Drop-in workshops**, which are open to any student who may wish to brush up on a particular key-skill. These are commonly used for Information Technology and Application of Number.

Then there is the question of assessment and accreditation. Sadly, even with the most desirable programmes outcomes are less highly regarded by students unless they are assessed and accredited. Presently this is not-the case with key skills in most HEIs, but there is a requirement for Graduate Apprenticeship students that-they should obtain the Key Skills Qualifications specified in their framework. Unless they have gained exemption *via*-the somewhat dubious 'proxy' route, this means that they will have to pass an external test, but-more importantly, they will need to compile a Key Skills Portfolio, in which the evidence demonstrates their-competence to satisfy the specifications at the relevant level. Good practice in portfolio-building is not widespread in higher education, with quantity taking precedence over the quality of the evidence. Neither does-there appear to be an appreciation of the role of the portfolio as an aid to better learning, where it can be-used as the focus for review and reflection by the student and tutor, and to meet the specifications for what-is probably the most important key skill, Improving Own Learning and Performance.

Chapter 5

NVQs and National Occupational Standards

The background to the introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in 1986 is best described by an-extract from the relevant White Paper, *Working Together, Education and Training*, which focused its attention on the need to co-ordinate training, education and qualifications for all people to ensure a competent workforce in Britain for the 21st century:

“Qualifications and high standards are not luxuries; they are necessities, central to securing a competent and adaptable workforce. Economic performance and individual job satisfaction both depend on maintaining and improving standards of performance. This applies from the boardroom to the shop floor. It applies as much to-adult training and re-training as to young people starting off in life.”

A recognition that the UK needed to raise levels of competence in the workforce in order to maintain and enhance competitiveness and its position as a highly skilled, innovative and technologically advanced nation state, reinforced the requirement to reform an archaic 19th century training and qualification system which had-lost touch with the needs of employers. Furthermore, the UK is no longer able to compete with the global labour economies such as China. For detailed accounts of the background to NVQs see Franklin (1997) and Hargraves (1998, 2000).

Tackling this reform required the formation of an overarching body with powers: the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ). Established by an Act of Parliament in 1986, NCVQ was given a remit to-develop and introduce a single, employer-led, vocational qualification framework. The Council was also required to regulate existing and new awarding bodies concerned with providing vocational qualifications, such-as City and Guilds, RSA and the Edexcel Foundation, as a means of maintaining and enhancing quality.

The principles were established to underpin the work of NCVQ and provided the benchmarks for the development of NVQs. Interestingly these principles continue to inform the work of the Qualifications and-Curriculum Authority (QCA), the successor body to NCVQ. The principles are as follows:

- Reflect the needs of employers and individuals
- Provide qualifications which reflect the achievements of clear standards of competence
- Provide more effective career and training routes for individuals
- Be less concerned about passing knowledge-based examinations, and more concerned with-performance in the workplace
- Be accessible to all sections of society without unnecessary barriers
- Identify common areas of competence across sectors and occupations.

The establishment of NCVQ between 1986 and 1995, in partnership with the-then Employment Department, resulted in the introduction of NVQs to every sector of the UK economy. This has generated a fundamental change in training provision, which is particularly noticeable in the further education sector (16–19 years).

The achievements up to 2001 are described in the following table. By September 2001 3.5 million NVQ certificates had been awarded, of which 95.1 per cent were at levels 1 to 3 and well over half of these were-at-level 2. Of the remainder, about 110,000 awards had been achieved at level 4 and 8,200 at level-5 (see-Table-1). (These figures count only people receiving a full NVQ and thus exclude unit certification.)

Table 1
Numbers of NVQ Certificates Awarded by Level, 1996–2001

Level	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
1	60,400	76,500	70,700	59,900	63,300	49,400
2	213,500	267,400	262,700	253,000	252,000	179,400
3	63,800	90,400	100,200	101,100	109,000	102,600
4	7846	8619	10956	13468	13770	14395
5	1058	1172	1083	858	876	957
Total	346,604	444,091	445,639	428,326	438,946	346,752

(Source QCA. Year to 30 September)

The NCVQ was eventually merged with the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority to establish the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). A non-department public body with responsibility for ensuring that there was a single national vocational qualifications framework, incorporating NVQs, GNVQs, Higher National Diplomas, Higher National Certificates, GCE Advanced levels, AS levels, and GCSEs, had been established for the first time. It is worth noting that there remained at least 17,000 vocational qualifications recognised by the Department for Education and Employment but which fell outside the existing national frameworks, quite apart from those already established by QCA (Second Report of the National Skills Task Force, 1999).

What are NVQs?

QCA has described NVQs as qualifications that reflect the skills, knowledge and understanding an individual possesses in relation to a specific area of work.

In order to make sense of this, NCVQ and subsequently QCA, have adopted a framework of 11 work areas, and-five levels of workplace functions. The work areas cover activities such as tending animals, plants and land-(the environment); constructing (building, architecture, engineering); manufacturing; providing goods and-services; and developing and extending knowledge and skills (which includes museums).

The five levels have been established and are as follows:

Level 1: Competence, which involves the application of knowledge and skills in the performance of a range of-varied work activities, most of which may be routine and predictable.

Level 2: Competence, which involves the application of knowledge and skills in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. Some of the activities are complex or non-routine, and there-is some individual responsibility or autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of-a-work group or team, may often be a requirement.

Level 3: Competence, which involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of varied work-activities performed in a wide variety of contexts, most of which are complex and non-routine. There-is-considerable responsibility and autonomy, and control or guidance of others is often required.

Level 4: Competence, which involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of complex, technical or professional work activities, performed in a wide variety of contexts and with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and the allocation of resources is-often present.

Level 5: Competence, which involves the application of skills and a significant range of fundamental principles across a wide, and often unpredictable, variety of contexts. Very substantial personal autonomy and often-significant responsibility for the work of others and for the allocation of substantial resources feature strongly, as do personal accountabilities for analysis and diagnosis, design, planning, execution and evaluation.

All NVQs are related to and approved by QCA at one of the five levels. Qualifications are submitted by awarding-bodies, such as Edexcel and City and Guilds, for approval by QCA. However, for an awarding body to-gain this-approval, there is an expectation that the proposed NVQ is based on standards of competence (National Occupational Standards), developed and drawn up by National Training Organisations, now Sector Skills Councils.

National Occupational Standards (NOS), which are the bedrock of the system, require some explanation. They-are derived from the workplace through functional analysis and conform to an approved format which describes what a candidate must do in order to demonstrate competence in the workplace. As a consequence, all standards of competence must:

- describe the outcomes of activity rather than a list of tasks
- describe work activities that can be demonstrated
- be relevant to work, in a range of employment contexts
- be accessible in terms of the activities they describe.

Each standard, often described as a unit, consists of three discrete components: elements of competence, performance criteria, and a range statement.

The range statement is expected to encapsulate the underpinning knowledge required to demonstrate competence at the different levels. However, it is becoming apparent that distinct knowledge statements are-required, particularly for higher-level NVQs.

Little is said regarding assessment. However, the NVQ is an assessment-driven model and as such places far-more emphasis on the assessment of performance against the standards of competence rather than the extent of education and training that might have been undertaken – the time-served system.

Assessment takes place when the candidate is ready (a student-centred approach) to meet the requisite group-of NOS, which form component parts of an NVQ. *Performance* is judged solely on the criteria specified in-the standard of competence. It is an evidence-driven model, with a particular emphasis on the workplace. Evidence is often generated through observation in the workplace, simulation, questioning and case histories.

Chapter 6

Case Studies

The following selected case studies provide useful insights as to how these schemes have been set up by-SSCs/former NTOs in response to industry need in partnership with HEIs and further education colleges. It-is-not an exhaustive list but an indication of the types of Graduate Apprenticeship which can be created.

1. Meeting the needs of land-based industries

Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector, designed its Graduate Apprenticeship to address its key priorities. These are to reduce skills gaps and shortages, boost the skills, productivity and business performance of the sector, and improve the learning provision needed to achieve these improvements. Over 70 per cent of land-based jobs demand skill levels at Level 3 or above. Yet less than-25 per cent of the sector's 1.5 million workers are qualified to Level 2 or 3. The sector urgently needs to attract highly qualified recruits and up skill its existing workforce to a higher level. The Graduate Apprenticeship addresses this challenge.

The Graduate Apprenticeship for the environmental and land-based sector incorporates:

- a degree or postgraduate qualification – not necessarily land-based
- generic skills identified by the Quality Assurance Agency as a benchmark within modern first degree programmes
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) Key Skills – communication, application of number, problem-solving, working with others and improving own learning and performance at Level 4, IT at Level-3
- an appropriate NVQ award or certification of individual NVQ units, depending on the needs of the individual and their employer
- additional employer requirements, such as a specialised technical qualification or wider business skills, to-meet the needs of the Graduate Apprentice's employer.

The land-based Graduate Apprenticeship scheme is flexible enough to embrace a wide range of potential learners. Not only will students undertaking a work placement as part of their undergraduate programme or in vacation time be eligible. Graduates joining the sector from any degree discipline will be able to apply to have the Graduate Apprenticeship integrated into their work-based training. Perhaps most importantly, the scheme will be open to employees wishing to improve their skills and study for a relevant degree or postgraduate qualification appropriate to the business.

The scheme is steered by one of Lantra's senior groups of employers and training specialists, the Standards and Qualifications Advisory Group. This is supported by a working group of employers from the four land-based industries particularly interested in developing a professional route for graduates – environmental conservation, the equine industry, horticulture and veterinary nursing. Lantra expects that all the other land-based industries, who are currently focusing their efforts on the lower skill levels, will eventually adopt the scheme.

Two higher education institutions already engaged with Lantra on related programmes – the University of Bristol-Writtle Agricultural College – were also involved in the initial shaping of the Graduate Apprenticeship. Consultation on the initiative then took place in the wider sector, including industry groups, professional bodies, trade associations and trade unions. As a result modifications were made and the scheme submitted to the Department for Education and Skills for approval.

Issues arising during the development process have been:

- the critical importance of flexibility, so that the Graduate Apprenticeship can be relevant to the diverse range-of land-based and environmental businesses. This includes the large number of micro-businesses which are not normally able to release employees for long periods of time
- the variety of individuals at whom the scheme is aimed. Initial assessment will be crucial. It was also felt that-the term ‘Graduate Apprentice’ may not appeal to experienced employees, and that consequently the scheme should be promoted as a professional development programme to this target group
- bringing together academic and vocational bodies. It is the first time that Lantra and HEIs have worked very-closely together to develop a curriculum, so there has been a steep learning curve on both sides. HEIs,-for example, are often unfamiliar with national occupational standards, key skills and other vocational-skills products.

When the Graduate Apprenticeship framework is approved, Lantra will launch the scheme to the sector and establish the registration and certification process. The aim is that each employer, learner and training provider will forge a Training Agreement, which Lantra will validate against the Graduate Apprenticeship framework and allocate a reference number on its database. Each apprenticeship will be monitored to track the progress of the-individual and a record made of any amendments to the programme, such as the addition of particular skills-to meet the needs of the business. When all the requirements of the agreement are met, Lantra will issue-a-completion certificate.

Lantra and other sectors are lobbying hard to ensure the sustainability of their Graduate Apprenticeships. They wish to see as much government emphasis on Graduate Apprenticeships as that placed on Foundation Degrees, so that they can offer both as equally valid programmes within a coherent framework of skills development.

2. GA adds another dimension to engineering degrees

(Based on an article in Engineering magazine, December 2002)

Coventry University engineering student Tom Dale became the first fully qualified Graduate Apprentice in-Engineering in the UK in November 2002. Tom completed his Graduate Apprenticeship by achieving a-BSc-Honours Design and Technology, Management NVQ Units and Key Skills at Level 4.

Coventry is one of 13 UK universities currently involved in the second stage of piloting of the Graduate Apprenticeship framework. The scheme, organised by SEMTA, the sector skills council for science, engineering,-manufacturing and technology, has been under development for two years and was initially piloted-at Kingston University.

Students are required to achieve a number of NVQ units at levels 3 or 4, along with key skills, which may or-may not be certificated, as well as a higher education qualification.

At Coventry, the course has been open to existing and incoming-students looking to strengthen traditional academic qualifications, and also to people from within industry who may already be able to demonstrate the-necessary vocational skills but are looking to gain-a-recognised academic qualification.

“The Graduate Apprenticeship adds another dimension to the degree. Students come out-with proof that they-can not only gain a degree but-demonstrate basic engineering, workplace and management skills.”

IAN DUNN, COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

“We hope Graduate Apprenticeship will become as well recognised as the Modern Apprenticeship,” says course tutor Ian Dunn. *“The Government has invested several million pounds in the development of this programme but-it still needs a lot of marketing. So far they’ve promoted Modern Apprenticeships very hard but-Graduate Apprenticeships not at all.”*

The Design and Technology BSc that Dale followed was, like many modern engineering degree courses, already-very vocational. *“I organise my course to allow students to work in industry for two days a week throughout the second and third years,”* explains Ian Dunn. *“Over two years they really get a chance to become-part of the team they’re placed in.”*

During his studies, Tom was on an integrated work placement with Brose, a German automotive supplier with a-division in Coventry which designs and develops window mechanisms for many of the large automotive manufacturers in the city. As part of the design team, Dale was given a lot of responsibility and opportunity to-meet his targets quickly.

At Coventry the pilot involves the University’s Centre for Lifelong Learning and three academic Schools. *“Tom’s-case has shown the real benefit of using National Occupational Standards to measure the levels of-competence that can be achieved in genuine work experience,”* says Trudi Wride, NVQ specialist in the Centre for Lifelong Learning.

As most engineering courses are already designed to allow students to develop key industry skills, it should be-relatively straightforward to adjust the structure, as Coventry has done, to enable these core competencies to-be measured and certified in line with the requirements of the Graduate Apprenticeship in Engineering.

Essentially, the course followed by Tom and others at Coventry is little different from the university’s existing engineering courses. It is the certification, says Ian Dunn, that adds the value. *“It adds another dimension to the-degree,”* he says. *“Students come out with proof that they can not only gain a degree but demonstrate basic engineering, workplace and management skills.”*

The universities involved have also been careful not to let the required skills become too specialised, so that they are transferable should the student wish to follow a career in a different engineering sector from that in which their work placement was based.

“At Coventry we’ve chosen generic headings for the skills like numeracy, literacy, communication and project management,” continued Ian. *“But we’ve also tried to ensure that they are gained at the highest standard possible to really challenge the students. The fact that Tom Dale is now working as a design engineer within a-different company demonstrates that the skills he has are valuable and certainly not company-specific.”*

Coventry has had a lot of interest from companies, and has been collaborating with some of its partners in industry with a view to making the GA in Engineering part of their internal graduate development programmes.

So, other than an additional title, what will students really gain-from undertaking a GA in Engineering that is not currently-available in sandwich courses or similar degrees that-incorporate work placement? Ian believes it is the understanding and self-awareness that students learn that-makes the difference.

Admitting that most engineering degrees are vocational these days he asserts that the GA *“forces people to go-through the-process of reflecting on what they have achieved and how-their performance – both practical and in terms of communication – has affected other members of the team.”*

As the NVQ skills required are evidence-driven rather than measured by examinations, most students on vocational courses are having little difficulty demonstrating the relevant expertise but as with any programme still in its infancy, lessons are being learned at the institutions involved about making the transition into the world-of Graduate Apprenticeship as smooth as possible. *“Universities will need to modify their procedures to-fit-in with the NVQ route and avoid duplication,”* explained Ian.

Overall, though, it seems the secondary pilot has been a success. Coventry for one has had a lot of interest from industry, particularly larger companies, and has been collaborating with some of its partners in industry with a view to making the engineering Graduate Apprenticeship part of their internal graduate development programmes. Whether the course takes off nationwide depends rather more on the government’s strategies for-promoting and fully implementing it.

3. A structure for developing graduates in the sport and recreation sector

With well over 300 degree courses devoted to sport and recreation, there is no shortage of students studying the subject. Despite the growing popularity of these degrees with students, however, the sector itself has little experience of graduate recruitment and development. Moreover, employers in the sector have said they need graduates to have vocational skills and understanding in addition to the knowledge they have gained at university.

In response to this SPRITO, the sector organisation for sport, recreation and allied occupations, has worked with a number of universities to develop a Graduate Apprenticeship scheme combining practical, work-based training and development with academic learning. The scheme is aimed at students and recent graduates who are looking to begin a career in the sport and recreation industry.

The Graduate Apprenticeship ensures that candidates undertake both practical and theoretical training in addition to gaining meaningful experience with a sport and recreation employer. The framework includes an-honours degree, a level 3 Sport and Recreation NVQ, an employment project, a certificate in industry and-organisational awareness and additional industry training such as coaching or first aid awards. This has-provided a structure, based on the real needs of the sector, for developing graduates in the workplace – a-mechanism for effective interaction between the sector’s employers and HEIs where none existed before.

One of the first universities to launch the scheme was Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (BCUC). The first Graduate Apprentice to register was Andrew Gardner, a second year honours student in Sports Industry Management and Football Studies. He carried out the work-based elements of his Graduate Apprenticeship at Wycombe Wanderers Football Club in the position of Assistant Club Secretary.

“The GA mix of theory, practice and experience was invaluable.”

Andrew Gardner, Graduate Apprentice

Keith Allen, WWFC Club Secretary, heard about the GA scheme through a presentation to industry at BCUC. At-the time Andrew, a BCUC student, was doing casual, unpaid work at the Club. Following negotiations it was-agreed that Andrew would work as a Graduate Apprentice at the Club with a defined job description and-areas of responsibility which include preparing programmes, managing travel and traffic arrangements, and-co-ordinating youth team match days.

The scheme has worked well for all concerned, not least the employer. Keith Allen believes that, as a Graduate Apprentice, Andrew was more capable and productive than other part-time or placement workers. He sees the scheme as an important opportunity to see how a candidate performs under pressure before deciding whether to employ the graduate full time at the end of the scheme. Keith had turned down dozens of CVs from

graduates but believes that the Graduate Apprenticeship scheme had greatly boosted Andrew's employment prospects, including his ambition to forge a career in football administration. He particularly valued being able to work in-partnership with the University to ensure that there was a good match between the potential Graduate Apprenticeship and the specific job roles he required the candidate to perform.

Andrew described the Graduate Apprenticeship as *“an unbelievable opportunity”* to work at the cutting edge of-the industry while completing his academic studies. *“The scheme wasn't like a basic work placement; it-was-a structured training programme that benefited both me and my employer. It helped massively with my-studies, giving me a more business-minded approach as well as ideas for assignments and research projects. The Graduate Apprenticeship mix of theory, practice and experience was invaluable,”* he said.

Potentially any undergraduate or recent graduate can benefit from the scheme. The Graduate Apprenticeship framework is flexible enough to apply to full-time courses, including four-year sandwich programmes; part-time programmes for those already working, those with HNC, HND or Foundation Degrees; and for recent Honours graduates working in the industry.

For employers, the Graduate Apprenticeship provides:

- analytical, communication and negotiation skills
- teamwork
- business, management and industry knowledge
- reliability and commitment
- industry qualifications and skills.

For students, the Graduate Apprenticeship provides opportunities to:

- gain real industry experience
- gain employment in the industry
- put their knowledge and understanding into practice
- achieve their career ambitions.

4. Unisys sees a bright future for IT Graduate Apprenticeship programme

Unisys' aim in piloting the Graduate Apprenticeship was to reduce the time taken for graduates to become billable, productive consultants. Working with e-skills UK, they have created a Graduate Apprenticeship programme that combines National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units and Key Skill units to complement the Honours Degrees their new recruits possess. The programme sets standards of competence in customer-facing skills, team and self-development skills, communication and problem solving, as well as requiring graduates to achieve two job-specific NVQ units, such as systems design, IT support, project management or marketing.

“The Graduate Apprenticeship is a low-cost, high-value approach where a person gains the qualification from doing the job well.”

Alex Bedford, Unisys

Alex Bedford, senior consultant responsible for the Services School of Unisys Corporate University, is delighted with the way the e-skills Graduate Apprenticeship has worked out. He sees it as allowing the graduates to focus on their own needs and know exactly what they have to do to gain promotion. The Graduate Apprenticeship covers the day-to-day work on the job and also gives more focus to good practice based on national standards. He said that it created a win-win situation for both employer and employee:

“It is a low-cost, high-value approach where a person gains the qualification from doing the job well or performing their role well. The IT industry has grown used to doing courses and taking exams. This is a paradigm shift – to achieve a certificate based on what you do and how you perform. Graduates perform many roles at Unisys and we find, now after working this through with e-skills UK, that the Graduate Apprenticeship covers all of them with national standards. It is a balance of everything they need for their short-term and long-term success.”

Unisys sees a bright future for the Graduate Apprenticeship in IT. Their plans include a fast-track programme for their graduates in the UK who have several years’ experience, so that they too can benefit. *“It will allow them to capture their learning and their experiences over the last two or three years, reflecting on skills and knowledge and embedding this in the learning culture of the organisation,”* said Alex. He even envisages a worldwide approach to structure international graduate development at Unisys around the UK e-skills Graduate Apprenticeship.

Chapter 7

Accreditation

Awards of Foundation Degrees, Graduate Apprenticeships and other professional development programmes being introduced into the higher education sector will be made by the individual universities based on the characteristics defined by DfES/Hefce/QAA on the published guidance notes. This includes NVQs/units, National-Occupational Standards (NOS) and key skills as well as work experience and academic components.

Further education, employers and, where relevant, Sector Skills Councils/former NTOs are expected to be fully-involved in the design and delivery of these degrees as the programmes are occupationally specific.

Quality assurance for the programmes is expected to be carried out in the normal way through the university systems meeting QAA benchmarks/Code of Practice and linked to QAA inspections.

The UVAC Quality Mark is intended to provide national recognition for HEIs, industry, undergraduates, postgraduates and employees who meet the national industry and education specification in what is, as-yet,-a-relatively new and developing area of higher vocational education. It is not a validation process.

These criteria and guidelines have been produced by UVAC and represent the views of UVAC alone. However, in-developing the system UVAC consulted and drew specifically upon the views of: HEIs, HEFCE, PWC, QAA, QCA and e-skills UK. In particular, UVAC is working in partnership with e-skills UK, SPRITO and the National Council for Work Experience, which endorse this accreditation scheme.

The Approvals Process for Graduate Apprenticeships

UVAC, in partnership with SSCs/former NTOs and employers, will approve and accredit HEIs for the provision and delivery of sector specific Graduate Apprenticeship programmes to nationally recognised standards.

UVAC and SSCs/former NTOs will appoint employer and university representatives to participate in the approval panel events, if considered necessary, in order to approve and accredit Graduate Apprenticeship schemes.

In the case of an HEI this is likely to be a validation event at which the HEI seeks to approve and recognise the-Graduate Apprenticeship scheme and/or its components through the HEI Quality Assurance procedure. These representatives could also function as the HEI's external panel members if requested. However, written submissions from HEIs or other SSCs/former NTOs are acceptable and subject to an independent assessment process, described in the following sections.

In the case of GA programmes managed by an employer or independent training provider, then UVAC, through its Education and Accreditation Panel, and the relevant SSC/former NTO, may negotiate the implementation of the approval and accreditation process with the intending provider, without any loss of rigour or loss of parity between individual schemes.

An HEI can approach UVAC for accreditation at any time, and where joint arrangements are not in place with the-relevant Sector Skills Council/former NTO these will be negotiated on behalf of the applicant. Similarly the-sector Skills Council/former NTO can approach UVAC to jointly operate the integrated Quality Mark, and, where appropriate, provide a co-ordinated certification service.

Graduate Apprenticeship Submission Criteria

Applications for accreditation will be assessed against approved and established criteria and processed in-accordance with agreed procedures. In order to obtain the UVAC Graduate Apprenticeship Quality Mark applications must demonstrate that the following requirements are incorporated in the HEI's delivery mechanism-by providing:

- a statement of the HEI admissions and quality assurance procedures
- a statement of the HEI and employer-related induction process
- confirmation of conformance to mandatory requirements specified within relevant and sector-specific Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks
- confirmation of Graduate Apprenticeship registration with SSC/former NTO (if the scheme is not registered this process will incorporate registration)
- identification of the educational objectives and outcomes
- explanation of the use and integration of Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L)
- clear identification of the type and duration of the sector-specific work experience provision
- conformance to the relevant and appropriate regulatory issues such as health and safety
- availability of appropriate human and physical resources
- delivery and assessment mechanisms and techniques
- monitoring and evaluation arrangements
- awarding, certification and achievement processes.

Applicants are encouraged, wherever possible, to draw from existing relevant HEI practice and procedures, and,-if registered, from the original submission documentation. This process is not intended to create an additional burden but rather draw from current practice.

All applications for accreditation must be authorised by the appropriate officer of the HEI or designated official of-the training provider or employer.

The successful completion of the accreditation process will achieve both Sector Skills Councils'/former NTOs' recognition and UVAC-accredited and authorised status. UVAC will, in association with the Sector Skills Councils/ former NTOs, provide advice and guidance on the accreditation process.

The process is intended to be supportive of HEIs in the development and delivery of programmes, and provide a-recognition mark, which adds value to the individual scheme whilst also providing a clear statement of confidence in the programme for the benefit of employers and students.

Frameworks

The following table briefly describes the approved frameworks in place and further details can be found on the UVAC website at www.uvac.ac.uk/thegadirectory.htm

Graduate Apprenticeship Title	SSC/former NTO/Organisation Responsible
Audio Visual	Industries Skillset/Thames Valley University
Broadcast, Film, Video & Interactive Media	Industry Skillset/Thames Valley University
Business Administration	Council for Administration/Oxford Brookes University
Ceramics	Assoc. for Ceramic Training & Development/Staffordshire University
Civil Engineering (1) (This is not a GA National Framework)	Construction Industry Training Board/Nottingham Trent University
Civil Engineering (2) (This is not a GA National Framework)	Construction Industry Training Board/Kingston University
Community and Participatory Arts	Metier NTO/King Alfred's College
Cultural Heritage	Cultural Heritage NTO/King Alfred's College
Diplomates	e-skills UK/Carshalton College
Early Childhood	Early Years NTO/Birmingham College of Food, Tourism & Creative-Studies
Engineering Manufacture	SEMTA/Kingston University
Environmental and Land-based Sector	Lantra/University of Bristol/Writtle College
Food and Drink	Food & Drink NTO/Liverpool John Moores University & Manchester-Metropolitan University
Generic Science	SEMTA/Various institutions
Hospitality	Hospitality Training Foundation/Various institutions
Industrial Management and Practice	e-skills UK/Loughborough University
Internet Services Delivery	e-skills UK/Chester College of HE
Jewellery	SEMTA/University of Central England
Land-Based Industries	Lantra/University of Bristol
Management	Management Standards Centre/Various institutions
Pharmaceutical	Industry Assoc. of British Pharmaceutical Industry/University of Cambridge
Print & Graphic Communication	Print & Graphic Communication NTO/South Nottingham College & London College of Printing
Professional Contemporary Dance (This is not a GA National Framework)	Metier NTO/The Northern School of Contemporary Dance
Property Services	Property Services NTO/Sheffield Hallam University
Security Industry	Security Industry Training Organisation/University of Leicester
Sport, Recreation and Allied Occupations	SPRITO/Various institutions
Telecommunications	e-skills UK/Various institutions
Textiles	National Textiles Training Organisation/Bolton Institute

Chapter 8

Action Required for Sustaining Graduate Apprenticeships

The action points and recommendations that follow have been produced on the basis of issues raised at the-Graduate Apprenticeship National Network (GANN) meetings which were sponsored by DfES and Hefce.

The Success of Graduate Apprenticeship

Graduate Apprenticeship has been a successful initiative and should be acknowledged. In particular:

- Graduate Apprenticeship is **a unique and highly effective partnership between HEIs and employers**. Since its launch in 1998, 50 HEIs and employers from approximately 30 sectors represented by SSCs/former NTOs have worked together to develop Graduate Apprenticeship learning frameworks. Partnerships have been developed on the basis of defined national criteria, with sufficient flexibility to reflect local HEI circumstances and sector skills needs and are increasingly attracting the support of RDAs and local LSCs.
- Graduate Apprenticeship is **the key mechanism at honours and postgraduate degree levels which enables HEIs to work with SSCs/former NTOs to enhance employability and respond to defined sector skills needs**. Working with HEIs, SSCs/former NTOs have developed learning programmes that are designed to deliver the skills sector employers have identified as essential to future productivity and performance.
- Graduate Apprenticeship **enables the effective integration of vocational (NVQ/NOS) and academic standards and 'on campus' and work-based learning in honours and postgraduate degree programmes**. As such Graduate Apprenticeships are supporting HEIs and HEI staff overcome the academic and vocational divide, develop a greater understanding of work-based learning programmes and the abilities and attributes of individuals possessing work-based learning qualifications who wish to enter higher education.
- **Graduate Apprenticeship is a complementary initiative to the Foundation Degree**. Graduate Apprenticeships focus on honours and postgraduate degrees; Foundation Degrees are developed at a sub-honours degree level. Whereas Foundation Degrees are designed to embed the development of work-related skills in new degree programmes, Graduate Apprenticeship involves the delivery of relevant NVQs, NVQ units and key skills on top of a specified existing degree course. Both Foundation Degrees and Graduate Apprenticeship have, however, the same broad objectives: to open access to higher education and support higher education to become more responsive to skills needs.
- Although Graduate Apprenticeship has been a success, greater clarity is needed in national planning and support systems if its continued development is to be secured and its potential realised.
- **SSCs/former NTOs, HEIs and other partners would welcome a stronger policy commitment from DfES to the development of Graduate Apprenticeship**. Ideally, Graduate Apprenticeship should represent the key tool to develop employability in honours and postgraduate programmes, relate curriculum design to defined local, regional and national skills needs, develop employer and HEI partnership and open access to higher education to new learners in general and Modern Apprentices in particular.

Recommendation – DfES should acknowledge that Graduate Apprenticeship is a key tool that can be used to enhance employability and increase access to honours and postgraduate degree programmes. Case-studies from existing Graduate Apprenticeship schemes should be used to reinforce these points.

- **Graduate Apprenticeship has a low policy profile and needs to be more effectively promoted** – Graduate

Apprenticeship has a low profile, particularly in comparison to the Foundation Degree. More resource and activity are needed to promote Graduate Apprenticeship to employers, potential learners and those working within education and training.

Recommendation – Greater emphasis should be placed on Graduate Apprenticeship as a national and complementary brand to the Foundation Degree. Co-ordinated action is needed from DfES, SSDA, SSCs/former NTOs, HEIs, the LSC and RDAs to raise awareness of Graduate Apprenticeship with employers and individual learners.

- **Clarification is needed of the funding available to support Graduate Apprenticeship** – There is currently insufficient guidance on how Graduate Apprenticeship development and delivery should be funded. Whereas DfES has clearly stated that the Department has no plans to fund the development of further Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks, the roles of Hefce, SSDA, LSC and RDAs are less clear. SSCs/former NTOs are unsure as to how they could be supported through the SSDA to develop and revise frameworks, advise on their implementation and issue completion certificates. Similarly, HEIs are unsure as to how the delivery and assessment of NVQs, NVQ units or QCA Key Skills outlined in frameworks are funded and the respective roles and responsibilities of Hefce and the LSC.

Recommendation – SSDA should clarify how the SSC/former NTO role in Graduate Apprenticeship can be-funded. Further clarification is needed as to the respective roles of Hefce and the LSC in funding NVQ, NVQ unit registration, key skills and training and accreditation in Graduate Apprenticeship.

- **A clearer link is needed between Graduate Apprenticeship and the progression and access agenda** – As-an initiative with an emphasis on the importance of work-based learning and acquisition and accreditation of NVQs, NVQ units and key skills, Graduate Apprenticeships should be a particularly appropriate and suitable programme for Modern Apprentices entering higher education. Learning styles and the design of Graduate Apprenticeship programmes will reflect the composition of Advanced Modern Apprenticeship frameworks and could well represent a tool to design HE curricula to reflect the learning needs and attributes of Modern Apprentice learners. Unfortunately, despite some local good practice, the link between Modern Apprenticeship and Graduate Apprenticeship is insufficiently developed. Within Graduate Apprenticeship how, for example, is-Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning applied to the key skills and an NVQ attained through a Modern Apprenticeship, and how is an individual learner encouraged to develop further their key skills and-NVQ attainment?

Recommendation – Working with the LSC, Hefce, HEIs and SSCs/former NTOs, UVAC should prepare a paper outlining how SSCs/former NTOs, local LSCs and HEIs should work together to develop progression between Modern Apprenticeship and Graduate Apprenticeship. This activity should be conducted with reference to other development work currently being undertaken to enhance progression opportunities from-Modern Apprenticeship to Foundation Degrees.

- **Lack of defined roles and responsibilities** – HEIs and SSCs/former NTOs are currently unsure as to their-precise roles in Graduate Apprenticeship. Similarly, there is even more uncertainty as to the Graduate Apprenticeship roles and responsibilities of the LSC, RDAs, Ufl, awarding bodies and further education colleges. This can be problematic in the establishment of partnerships to support the development, implementation and delivery of Graduate Apprenticeship.

- **Insufficiently developed and applied national support mechanisms** – Graduate Apprenticeship is a national brand applied locally and sectorally. To maintain consistency and quality national mechanisms are required to support and regulate HEI and SSC/former NTO partnerships. In particular, national support mechanisms are needed to ensure new Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks and revisions to existing frameworks are approved in accordance with national criteria. Arrangements are also needed outlining how Graduate Apprenticeship achievement should be recognised through certification and how further education colleges can support the accreditation of NVQs, NVQ units and key skills. The UVAC Graduate Apprenticeship Quality Mark will help HEIs deliver Graduate Apprenticeship in accordance with sector skills needs, but related support mechanisms are also required.

Recommendation – The roles and responsibilities and national support mechanisms outlined in this paper should be endorsed by DfES, Hefce and the LSC.

- **Lack of ownership and accountability for Graduate Apprenticeship** – No one organisation is currently responsible or accountable for the success of Graduate Apprenticeship. Until recently the same situation existed for Modern Apprenticeship. Following the publication of the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee Report (Cassels Report) in 2001 the LSC was given responsibility and accountability for Modern-Apprenticeship. A similar decision in respect of Graduate Apprenticeship could well be appropriate.

Recommendation – The DfES and partner organisations should consider whether a single organisation should be made responsible or accountable for the success of Graduate Apprenticeship and, if so, which organisation would be best placed to assume this responsibility.

- **Current levels of flexibility in Graduate Apprenticeship design and delivery could adversely impact on-the-quality and credibility of the initiative** – Flexibility in Graduate Apprenticeship is important to meet sector skills and HEI delivery needs, but current levels of flexibility make Graduate Apprenticeship difficult to define, explain and promote as an initiative. Two issues in particular are contentious. The first involves Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks that focus on graduates who have completed their honours degree and act as a-sector-designed in-company graduate development programme. The second involves the use of NOS as an alternative to an NVQ or NVQ units.

Recommendation – DfES and UVAC should reflect on the above and determine a definition for Graduate Apprenticeship which achieves an appropriate balance between flexibility and national consistency.

HEIs, SSCs/former NTOs and others with an interest in higher education, skills and employability are invited to comment on the issues raised in this paper.

University Vocational Awards Council

Bolton Institute of Higher Education

Chadwick Campus Bolton BL2 1JW

Tel: 01204 903351/903355

Fax: 01204 903354

Email: uvac@bolton.ac.uk

Website: www.uvac.ac.uk