

Session Title:	Everything you ever wanted to know about Degree Apprenticeships
Speaker(s):	Emma Chu – Manchester Metropolitan University Karen Hinton – University of Suffolk
Chair:	Chlo Sinclair University of Law
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<p>Speaker and/or Institution Biography Information:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emma Chu – Student Recruitment Officer (Degree Apprenticeships) – Manchester Metropolitan University ▪ Karen Hinton – Associate Director Marketing, University of Suffolk <p>Emma currently works at Manchester Metropolitan University as a Student Recruitment Officer specifically for Degree Apprenticeships. Having previously worked for the University of Chester for over a decade as an Alternative Routes Widening Participation Officer, she brings a wealth of experience working on degree apprenticeships and establishing new programmes.</p> <p>Karen has worked at the University of Suffolk for 7 years, firstly as Head of Student Recruitment and Market Development and started the role as Associate Director of Marketing in 2023. In this capacity, Karen has set-up and managed the Degree Apprenticeships portfolio at the University of Suffolk. Karen had previously worked at University of Edinburgh as Schools Outreach Officer and has worked in the Higher Education sector for over two decades.</p>
<p>Overview/Aim of session:</p>	<p>The aim of this session is to equip HELOA members with the confidence and understanding of Degree Apprenticeships and how to promote them to future prospective students.</p> <p>Outline of this session:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are Degree Apprenticeships? 2. What is the application process like when applying for Degree Apprenticeships?

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What are the key differences between traditional study and Degree Apprenticeships? 4. Where to find Degree Apprenticeships? 5. Discussions!
<p>Workshop Content</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are Degree Apprenticeships? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A degree apprenticeship gives students the opportunity to gain a paid-for degree while gaining industry experience and earning a salary. ▪ Degree apprenticeships were first set-up in 2015, and usually combine 80% work-based learning, with 20% studying at a higher education institution, usually for 1 day a week. ▪ Degree apprenticeships typically attract more mature learners proportionally than traditional university courses – this is good for Widening Participation! ▪ For example, at Manchester Metropolitan University, they have 3,500-degree apprentices now, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 35% are school leavers (18 to 19-year-olds) ▪ In 2023, around 54% of students are applying for a degree apprenticeship as well as making an application on UCAS for higher education courses. ▪ The number of Degree Apprenticeships available is growing year-on-year with the development of new degree apprenticeship programmes in areas which previously did not have any provision. For example, in the medical profession, there is now a Medical Doctor Degree Apprenticeship, which has been established by NHS Health Education England. ▪ Some Degree Apprenticeships are by their very nature designed to upskill professionals (like some master’s level qualifications) rather than attract school leavers, such as the Level 7 – Advanced Clinical Practitioner, which caters for professionals who have already been in the industry for a while. 2. What is the Application Process like and how does it differ from applying on UCAS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The first myth to bust is that students do NOT apply for degree apprenticeships on UCAS.com – they apply through the employer on their vacancies page. ▪ Applications are made directly through the employer,

so the timeframe is different to the UCAS deadlines.

- Degree apprenticeships are very competitive to get onto – There were 41,340 Level 6 (Bachelors) and 7 (Masters) degree apprenticeship places in 2023!
- This compares with approx. 551,000 students who accepted a place on UCAS in 2023.
- The entry requirements can differ compared to university courses – if anything, the benchmark to progress onto a degree apprenticeship is higher than undergraduate programmes due to the fierce competition. The apprentices also need to meet the requirements required by the university to get onto the degree apprenticeship.
- Degree apprenticeships generally require students to have obtained GCSEs in English and Maths, or equivalent Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications – they will look for evidence of occupational skills, knowledge, and behaviour.
- There are peaks and troughs in the cycle, just like there is with UCAS, but the peak time for vacancies is between November and April for students trying to be placed by the following September.
- The actual application process is often longer than for many UCAS courses, as virtually all degree apprentices must be interviewed, versus only some students applying for undergraduate programmes (e.g. Health courses)
- Overall, it is suggested practitioners' advice those exploring and seeking a degree apprenticeship to apply for traditional university courses as well, as the small volume of places available (see above) means that the ratio of applicants to places is low, and this may get even tighter as awareness of degree apprenticeships increases.

3. What are the key differences between traditional study and degree apprenticeships?

- Students find degree apprenticeships very **intense**, spending 80% of their time in work and 20% studying - trying to cram a week worth of content into one day is challenging!
- Offers to degree apprentices are usually based on predicted grades, so they probably won't be told until

results day whether they are successful or not in obtaining a place.

- However, employers are looking for 'potential' not the perfect candidate!
- Although, if when it comes to Results Day and the entry criteria is not met, the employer may decide to terminate the contract or offer an alternative route where possible.
- Degree apprentices are **NOT** eligible for student accommodation, so therefore, they tend to live either at home, with family members or somewhere near to where they grew up as opposed to moving away.
- Reports suggest that students who undertake a degree apprenticeship feel much more prepared for the world of work than those who graduate from undergraduate and postgraduate study.
- However, there is less choice than traditional courses, in terms of the subject disciplines available as a degree apprenticeship – for example, there are very few apprenticeships in Humanities and Social Science disciplines.
- Overall, employers tend to have high satisfaction in their degree apprentices and positively want to expand their reach.

4. Where are the best places to find Degree Apprenticeships?

- The **best place to search** for Degree Apprenticeships is on the **GOV.UK website**, which has every employer who is offering Degree Apprenticeships on there.
- Prospective apprentices can set vacancy alerts to filter roles by an area of their interest.
- **UCAS.com** does list Degree Apprenticeships on the UCAS Hub - However, it will often be the larger employers who recruit on annual programmes such as PWC or Siemens. A lot of small, self-employed businesses who have vacancies often aren't listed on UCAS.

	<p>5. Discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenges with setting up and running Degree Apprenticeships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Larger urban areas such as Manchester and London often have the larger multi-national companies (such as PwC) which recruit lots of students on Degree Apprenticeships programmes. ○ Smaller towns and rural areas, such as Suffolk, will often have smaller SME and sole trader businesses which don't often have annual recruitment campaigns, making it more challenging to foster relationships and know when vacancies are. ▪ Integrating Degree Apprenticeships team into the wider Student Recruitment and Outreach teams can be challenging as there is a perception that the work is very separate, when in fact recruiting degree apprentices is still Student Recruitment. ▪ Often, the Partnerships and Apprenticeship teams are very much a separate entry within Marketing and Student Engagement departments, and there isn't much knowledge for representatives to go out on the road to promote the programmes – Here's hoping this session will help change that! ▪ Establishing partnerships with companies can be challenging, due to the cost-of-living crisis as well as longer term funding issues – although, funding from the apprenticeships levy is useful.
<p>Case Studies/Examples:</p>	<p>Case Study – A profile of a Degree Apprentice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 80% of their time is spent in the workplace. ▪ 6 hours per week off work for training – this is a legal requirement which must be strictly monitored and logged to ensure compliance. ▪ A minimum of 25 days studying per year, as this is a legal requirement! ▪ If an apprentice is not in university one week, e.g. (for example – summer vacation), then an apprentice can spend their time doing assignments and work-based projects, which will form part of their allocated 'study time'.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Study time' can constitute a combination of assignments and/or work-based projects depending on what their priorities are for that point in time. ▪ As apprentices sign a contract they are contractually entitled to Annual Leave, just like normal employees of any business or organisation are, and they are entitled to the same minimum allowances as full-time employees – 20 days or 4 weeks. However, some companies will allow and give more! ▪ However, students can only take their Annual Leave during the summer holiday or at Christmas and Easter, as otherwise it would clash with university timetabling during semesters. ▪ From the employer's perspective, many large employers will have Business Liaison Manager, who onboard all of the degree apprentices, and will have regular catchups to monitor their progress and check their wellbeing. This isn't always available at SMEs or businesses with only one or two employees. <p>What support is available for degree apprentices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree apprentices will often get a workplace mentor. ▪ As they are only in university one day a week, they will often have designated programme leaders and lecturers when they are studying. ▪ Despite only visiting university sporadically, degree apprentices still have full access to Student Union facilities. ▪ Association of Apprentices is a non-governmental organisation helping apprentices maximise their potential as they start their careers. ▪ Most local authorities have an Apprenticeships Portal, which also includes Higher and Degree-Level Apprenticeships where students can find out the opportunities available to them in their local area.
<p>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It has been noted that the many universities do not offer any degree apprenticeships at all, including City, University of London and Edge Hill University among others.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whereas some universities such as Anglia Ruskin University and Manchester Metropolitan University have a wide provision of Degree Apprenticeships. Anglia Ruskin University, for example, offer over 200 Degree Apprenticeship programmes! ▪ Overall, there is a large variation of provision around the sector! ▪ It was also mentioned in the Roundtable discussion that some teachers are not aware of how to help students apply to degree apprenticeships – Therefore, raising awareness is significant to helping their growth in the future.
<p>Questions and Answers:</p>	<p>Question 1: Are degree apprenticeships offered on a need basis?</p> <p>In Summary: It varies to be honest!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Larger companies tend to be more organised running an annual programme of recruitment. ▪ With smaller employers, recruitment cycles vary - One year, they might offer two roles, whereas next year, they may not recruit at all! It can change each year depending on the needs of the business. ▪ The largest peak in recruitment of degree apprentices is the October Half-Term. ▪ Advertisements for degree apprentices are often ahead of the main UCAS Application cycle, so if students are looking to apply or both a degree apprenticeship and apply through UCAS for traditional university programmes, they need to be proactive and have their applications for degree apprenticeships ready earlier on, to maximise their chances for success in being accepted. <p>Question 2: Are Degree Apprentices eligible for Student Finance?</p> <p>Answer: No, as they will be earning a salary - This makes degree apprentices ineligible for Student Finance!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This can be caveated with the fact that most employers are signed up to the National Living Wage (even if apprentices are under the age of 21), and they must pay at least the National Minimum

	<p>Wage as part of their contractual obligations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage Rates are £10.42 for anyone over the age of 23, and from 1 April 2024, workers aged 21 and over will be entitled to the National Living Wage. ▪ These rates are in most cases higher than the maximum maintenance loan available by Student Finance in many parts of the UK.
<p>Summary and Key takeaways:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree Apprenticeships are an exciting alternative way of obtaining a Higher Education qualification in a practical, work-based setting. ▪ Degree apprentices' benefit from being trained for a specific sector, and often a specific role within that sector – highly specialised. ▪ A degree apprenticeship offers an excellent opportunity to apply learning to an occupation, which can really help to address skills gaps. ▪ No student loan repayments – This can mean net pay can be higher for some degree apprentices than graduates, as there are no loan repayments each month. <p>Things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The employer is in full control of the Degree Apprenticeship – the role can be cancelled at any time! ▪ The variety of subject choice is often smaller than undergraduate courses – For example, there are very few degree apprenticeships in Humanities and Social Science subjects. ▪ Obviously, the competition is great, but if the student is motivated to work, then it can be a good next step! <p>Top tips for advising prospective students:</p> <p>Prospective apprentices should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider what type of university experience is important to them – do they want a more traditional experience, or would a practical, hands-on based

	<p>learning suit them better?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Research all the apprenticeship options out there, and what potential employers are there in the industry they want to go into.3. Reach out to employers directly for information on vacancies and deadlines to apply.4. Have a well-crafted CV ready! This can be adapted for different vacancies increasing the plethora of options available.5. Don't rule out against going to University – Good for students to keep all their options open.6. Still apply through UCAS for traditional study, as students can apply for both Degree Apprenticeships and UCAS choices simultaneously. However, urge on the side of caution when considering paying accommodation deposits until certain on the final decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Overall, the most significant benefit is that degree apprentices are gaining key knowledge and skills about a subject and industry, whilst earning money!
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