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Key Challenges
for Degree Apprenticeship e-Portfolios

Degree Apprenticeships are an important new initiative from the government that supports individuals to study for a degree while employed.

With the introduction of the Employer Training Levy in April 2017, the demand for Degree Apprenticeships from employers is expected to be high. We have been working in this area for some time on early adopter programmes and observe the following six key challenges for university systems infrastructure to support Degree Apprenticeships.

1. Employer engagement.

Unlike most other university academic programmes, a core aspect of Degree Apprenticeships includes the active involvement of the employer in the process. This brings requirements for participation by employer representatives such as employer student mentors/line managers and possibly an employer Training Manager, each with different roles, responsibilities and potentially reporting access rights.

2. Multiple frameworks.

In Degree Apprenticeships, It is quite likely that multiple frameworks may be needed to operate concurrently throughout the programme. These could for example include the university's main learning objective framework for the university degree, the external standard framework for the degree apprenticeship, the inclusion of a relevant professional body framework such as Chartered Manager or Chartered Engineer and even a separate university standard employability framework.

3. Supporting remote learners.

With Degree Apprenticeships spending around 30 hours per work at work, it is highly likely that your learners will be needing to participate in your programme whilst they are remote, even if this is combined with periods of face-to-face activity. Some learners from larger employers may even be spread across the UK or beyond, and the employer Training Manager may also have similar

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challenges of supporting remote employees. The systems infrastructure for Degree Apprenticeships therefore needs to anticipate and support the challenges in this environment for faculty, employer and student.

4. Supporting external participants.

Building upon the above requirement for employer engagement in Degree Apprenticeships, this involves providing access to parts of the system process to users who are not traditionally supported/given access to central university infrastructure systems. These users would not normally be registered on central university IT systems may therefore find this aspect challenging.

5. More flexible than "normal".

With multiple external stakeholders who may wish to see the same evidence information managed and presented in different ways to match their business processes, the formatting capability of showcasing

evidence should be highly flexible. Also different employers and different professional bodies may wish to see some of their specific forms used within the student's activity held within the portfolio, so a flexible forms editor is important.

6. End of Programme Portfolio Retention.

The student being able to take away their portfolio in a useful form at end of their apprenticeship programme is potentially of very great value for the student and possibly also for the employer. At the same time the university needs to retain the correct level of student activity records and assessed work for quality audit purposes. After graduation the student's portfolio should ideally remain with the student in broadly the same form and functionality they are used to, and continue to be a useful lifelong development tool as they progress through their career.

Please Join Us. We are now actively supporting early adopters in delivering Degree Apprenticeships and are building upon the innovative Myshowcase.me portfolio design to streamline support for Degree Apprenticeships. This is a collaborative effort across multiple institutions—you are welcome to join us, as we jointly innovate in this area. For more detail please contact us at:

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