



Degree & Graduate Apprenticeships: Stakeholder Insights

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What is the topic and why is it important?

Degree and graduate apprenticeships are the latest addition to the apprenticeship family in the UK, with ambitious aims of bridging skills gaps, widening participation in higher education and driving economic growth and productivity - to name a few. But **what do the people who engage with these programmes think?** Few studies have been conducted involving the multiple stakeholders of degree and graduate apprenticeship programmes.

This study undertakes this task, recognising the interconnectedness of these stakeholders and the vital need to explore their experiences in multiple contexts. This study will unveil the benefits and challenges of engaging with degree and graduate apprenticeships for **policy makers, employers, apprentices and academics**, while examining how some of the ambitious policy motivations compare to lived experiences.



Methodology

A **qualitative study** was conducted, gathering insight from key stakeholders through **27 in-depth interviews** across six case studies in Scotland and England. The six case studies covered different degree and graduate apprenticeship programmes, varying in subjects, locations and institution types.



Key research questions

Interviews with stakeholders focused on:

Their Motivations for **Their Experiences of** **The Benefits of** **The Challenges of**
engaging with degree & graduate apprenticeships.

Policy Makers

Employers

Apprentices

Academics



Theoretical framework

A **multi-disciplinary** and carefully constructed **theoretical framework** has been designed to support a well-rounded interpretation of the findings.

Skill Ecosystems

Helps to understand stakeholder collaboration.

Social Constructivism

Helps to understand teaching and learning experiences.

Human Capital Theory

Helps to understand economic motivations.



What are some notable key findings?

Heavy workloads are a persistent and challenging issue for apprentices, academics and employers.



The **variety and calibre of candidates** attracted to programmes can be both beneficial and challenging for academics and employers.

Stakeholders have **mixed views on whether programmes are achieving outcomes set out in policy**, particularly widening participation.



Newer programmes often operate under a **'trial and error'** approach. When managed well, this can have positive outcomes, but for some this has led to challenging circumstances.

There are conflicting stakeholder views on the **suitability** of degree and graduate apprenticeships for **particular professions.**

