



**National Assembly for Wales Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee Consultation: Apprenticeships in Wales 2017
Cardiff University response, May 2017**

1. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales 2017. Our response focuses the specific point in the terms of reference: **the development of higher level Apprenticeships, with the support of further and higher education institutions.**
2. Cardiff University is highly committed to addressing skills shortages in Wales and developing higher level skills within the Welsh economy and thereby exploring opportunities associated with Degree Apprenticeships.
3. Cardiff University's activities support a total of 11,311 jobs throughout the UK, of which almost 10,000 are in Wales. We already engage with a large and diverse range of employers, developing courses and programmes of benefit to students and industry alike. Our graduates are among the most sought-after by employers, with over 94%* finding employment or entering further study within six months of graduating.
**HESA Destination of Leavers in Higher Education survey 2014/15.*
4. Cardiff University has a thriving innovation culture and already connects industry, business, and government with our academics, nurturing student entrepreneurship and championing grass-roots business development. We would be happy to assist the Welsh Government in explaining and promoting the benefits of Degree Apprenticeships through our Innovation Network.
5. We see numerous opportunities for Cardiff University with regard to Degree Apprenticeships linked to the changing nature and demographics of those seeking higher level apprenticeships, the opportunities to further our engagement with industry, the opportunities to work with non-traditional Degree Apprenticeship sectors and disciplines, and the marketing and recruitment opportunities for widening participation and mature students in the South Wales area and beyond.
6. Cardiff University would like to offer some points for consideration in respect of higher level Apprenticeships:

- Potential providers will be keen to receive clarity on the funding and support available to develop provision across a range of subject areas.
 - It would be helpful to establish the exact details of the process for designing and developing provision, particularly concerning quality assurance, approval of programme content and approval of suitable providers.
 - Feedback received from different Welsh employers would indicate that they remain unclear about how they will access funding for apprenticeships. It seems that the greatest impact will come from larger employers, although the greatest diversity of skills may come from smaller companies, who will not pay the levy. Has the Welsh Government given any consideration to the need to incentivise organisations of different scales and their duty to support SMEs?
 - While we welcome the focus on developing STEM skills there may also be opportunities in other sectors. It would be useful to explore opportunities for growth in skills of importance to future generations including primarily the economy but also social, environmental and cultural fields.
 - Given that the success of any new scheme will be dependent on take-up, will there be a marketing campaign to outline the benefits of Degree Apprenticeships across all sectors?
 - Has any consideration been given to the balance between work-based learning and academic studies? There is great potential here to capture a different way of learning which addresses the new ways in which students now engage with learning.
7. The development of degree apprenticeships presents an exciting opportunity for Wales and for its universities. Cardiff University is keen to engage fully with the Committee for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills in this regard. The institutional lead in this area, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Karen Holford is happy to meet with the Committee or another Welsh Government representative to discuss these issues further.