Richard Review of Apprenticeships

A response from the Institute for Learning on behalf of professional teaching and training practitioners in further education and skills

September 2012
Introduction

The Institute for Learning (IfL) is the independent professional body for teaching and training professionals in further education and skills, currently with more than 75,000 members. Our objective is to promote education and training for the public benefit by the enhancement and maintenance of the quality, standards and practice of learning and teaching, through professional body membership.

Enabling learners to succeed requires commitment and dedication, skills and expertise of a range of individuals. This is more evident in apprenticeships possibly than in any other form of education. For the Review to be successful in its purpose, it must have vision for a system where each of the various players can be at the top of their game.

Those in direct contact with apprentices are in the best position to deliver maximum impact through the apprenticeship system. Trainers, tutors, assessors and others on the front line deliver high quality education and training in the work place and in providers. As the government considers how to ensure our apprenticeship system develops to meets the needs of the future demands of industry and the economy, approaches to teaching, training and learning will have to develop too to be ever responsive and relevant.

To inform this response, IfL issued a survey to our members in the work based learning part of the sector. Owing to the call for evidence taking place over the summer we have decided to ensure that trainers and assessors had the maximum opportunity to participate towards the end of August and early September, after the main holiday period. This response is based on evidence up to Friday 7 September 2012.

Should the review wish to discuss this response with IfL further, please contact policy.mailbox@ifl.ac.uk
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Executive Summary

The Institute for Learning (IfL) has conducted an extensive online survey which attracted responses from 731 members to date from our membership in the work based learning part of the further education and skills sector.

This response has been informed by the insights and experiences of teaching and training practitioners. Below is a summary of the key points in our response:

- Apprenticeships for both 16-19 year olds and adults share a core set of aims, objectives and expectations. IfL members also believe this includes an industry approved qualification, a secure post in longer term employment once the apprenticeship has been completed and a clear progression route to higher level qualifications. IfL members assert strongly that training should be delivered by qualified experts on and off the job and that apprenticeships should be a programme of education in addition to a programme of training. These, and further, points are explored further in this response.

- In the future, apprenticeships should continue to be accessible to young people and to adults but that a clearer distinction is needed between adult apprenticeships and other forms of vocational training of interest to employers.

- Vocational professional bodies are a common source of information for teaching and training practitioners on environmental, technological and economical developments in their vocational or subject area, alongside sector skills councils and further education and skills providers.

- The effective utilisation of learning technology, flexibility in delivery methods and responsiveness to learner and employer demand were cited as defining features of high quality apprenticeships. IfL members provided further evidence to support their claims which are grounded in current practice.

- We demonstrate that expert teaching and training practitioners are uniquely placed in the system, forming close relationships with employers and apprentices and are crucial to the success and reputation of the system. We provide evidence that suggests that there is a concerning lack of forward looking continuing professional development opportunities for one in four teaching and training practitioners.
Methodology

Using online software, IfL created a survey to capture the views of IfL members in the work based learning part of the sector. The survey was themes around the core questions identified in the ‘Richard Review of Apprenticeships Call for Evidence’ document.

We have received 731 responses to our online survey. The table below represents the breakdown of respondents and their responsibilities in relation to apprenticeships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In what capacity are you involved in apprenticeship?</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational trainer (provider)</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational trainer (work based)</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum manager</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer relations</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top responses listed as ‘other’ were internal verifiers, quality managers, functional skills tutors and other managers. Clearly, many respondents fulfill more than one of these roles.

We asked respondents to identify their specialist vocational or ‘subject’ area in order to gain a sense of the breadth of experiences across the curriculum areas that are delivered in apprenticeships. The subject headings were taken from the sector list provided by the National Apprenticeship Service’s vacancy matching service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which subject area(s) do you specialise in?</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, horticulture and animal care</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, media and publishing</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, administration and law</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, planning and the built environment</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and manufacturing technologies</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, public services and care</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and communication technology</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure, travel and tourism</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and commercial enterprise</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and mathematics</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents who chose ‘other’ often cited where they hold multiple subject specialisms and listed subjects that they felt was difficult to categorise such as management, accounting and functional skills.

Of those who took part in the survey, we found that there was a near equal split of those who were involved in intermediate and advanced level apprenticeships meaning that for most they work on apprenticeships at both these levels; 86.4 per cent and 84.5 per cent respectively. Predictably, a much lower proportion of respondents were involved in higher level apprenticeships, 16.8 per cent and even fewer at level 1, less than 3 per cent.

The online survey was distributed to the work based learning segment of the IfL database and was promoted through our e-newsletters and direct member e-mail.
1.0 Principles

1.1 What should the aims and objectives of apprenticeships be?

We asked our members for their views on what apprenticeships should set out to provide for 16-19 year olds and for adults. Primarily we sought to gain a sense of what the principle aims and objectives should be but also to identify if there were any differences between what apprenticeships should provide for people coming in to an apprenticeship as a young person and as an adult.

Our survey found that there was synergy between our members view on what an apprenticeship should provide 16-19 year olds and adults.

Almost every respondent said that they believed an industry approved qualification was important or very important; 97.5 per cent and 98.1 per cent for 16-19 year olds and adults respectively. All frameworks within a given sector should be closely linked to agreed occupational standards, owned by industry representative bodies themselves, and carefully crafted in partnership with teaching and learning experts from the further education and skills sector. This partnership is vital. Creating a national basis for apprenticeship frameworks does not have to come at the expense of flexibilities for individual employers. Our survey shows clearly that qualifications must have the approval of the industry itself but, as is demonstrated in apprenticeship systems in countries such as Switzerland, individual employers can and should be able to input content to meet their needs.

A high proportion, over 80 per cent, said that they believe a secure post in longer term employment post-apprenticeship, job prospects linked to the level of apprenticeship and a clear progression route to higher level qualifications were important or very important objectives of apprenticeships.

All apprenticeships must provide training delivered on and off the job by qualified experts. Not only does this offer safeguards and guarantees to learners, employers and the tax payer, but it is one of the most
important ways of protecting the reputation of the apprenticeships ‘brand’ and the status of the vocational teaching and training profession. Respondents to our survey overwhelmingly supported this view with almost 97 per cent of respondents saying that training from qualified training experts both on and off the job were important or very important parts of apprenticeships.

Aside from the vocational training element of an apprenticeship, many respondents felt that broader educational aims should be included. For example, half of respondents said that a personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education element was an important or very important part of an apprenticeship for 16-19 year olds. It was felt that this was slightly less important for adult apprenticeships with 37 per cent saying that this was important or very important.

Respondents felt that other elements that could be considered as ‘general’ education, such as languages and sport, are less important but IfL feels strongly that for apprenticeships to have the most impact and value for money in the future, they should be considered for young people in particular as programmes of enriching education, not just programmes of vocational training. This is particularly relevant when considered in the context of the raising of the education and training participation age to 17 years old in 2013 and 18 in 2015.

In summary, in the views of IfL members, apprenticeships should set out to provide:

- An industry approved qualification
- A secure post in longer term employment when the apprenticeship has been completed
- Training delivered by qualified training experts both on and off the job
- Job and career prospects linked to the level of apprenticeship that has been achieved
- A clear route to higher level qualifications
- Training delivered by someone qualified to at least the level above what they are training in their vocational field or subject as we understand works well in New Zealand.
A programme of education to broaden the programme of training, which is particularly important for young people.

1.2 Who should apprenticeships be for?

IfL believes that apprenticeships should be accessible to any individual seeking to train, retrain or upskill in a new or existing career path.

The survey results show very clearly that there is consensus among teaching and training practitioners that apprenticeships should remain accessible for both young people and adults.

The survey provided respondents space to leave additional comments after this question. Common themes and concerns expressed were around ensuring value for money and accountability, especially in adult apprenticeships. It would be helpful therefore for the Review to attempt to draw a line under the current debate on what is considered an apprenticeship and other forms of vocational training. We
believe that there would be great value in the Review linking with the Commission for Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning, chaired by Frank McLoughlin CBE, on this matter in particular.

1.3 What outcomes should apprenticeships aim to deliver – for individuals, for employers, and for the wider economy?

IfL believes that all apprenticeships should aim to deliver technical and practical competencies which do more than satisfy the current demands of industry but that deliver skills which enable individuals to continue to learn and develop and to innovate in their practice in order to remain competent and competitive in the long term for the labour market. IfL believes that this is one of the best ways to have a positive impact for individuals, employers and the wider economy.

The notion of apprenticeships being responsive is an important issue for teaching and training practitioners. Of those who took part in our survey, a slight majority said that they do not believe that the apprenticeships they are involved with adequately take into account environmental and economic changes, challenges and developments over the last few years. This presents a major and challenging finding for the Richard Review to address.

Apprenticeships are a crucial part of the government’s drive to raise the standards of literacy and numeracy across the working population. Recent efforts to integrate literacy and numeracy in to apprenticeships frameworks appear, at least from the point of view of teachers and trainers, to be showing signs of progress. The majority of respondents to our survey, 67.9 per cent, said that it is quite or very straight forward to integrate literacy and 53.2 per cent said that it was quite or very straight forward to integrate numeracy.

Although this is encouraging, it still means that some 32% do not find it straight forward to integrate English/literacy and some 47% do not find it straight forward to integrate numeracy/mathematics. We expect the Richard Review will want to point to a future where effective integration and delivery of
English and mathematics is essential and indicate at a high level how such progress should be made. IfL considers firstly that teachers and trainers of apprenticeships must themselves hold English and mathematics qualifications at least at level two, and that there should be continuing professional development opportunities for practitioners to both boost their own skills in these areas if needed and to develop effective practice of integrating functional skills within vocational contexts. IfL is doing further work on this area which is feeding into the Commission for Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning and would we welcome the chance to work with the Richard Review team on supporting this direction and we have some practical steps underway already, for example through the process of gaining QTLS professional status where English and mathematics at level two are a requirement. More than 10,000 practitioners have so far gained QTLS with IfL. IfL has more than 12,000 members in the work based learning sector, as well as many more teachers and trainers who will be working to support apprentices through further education colleges and adult learning services, and so we are well placed to help with communications, engagement and offering CPD training and development that reaches individual trainers, assessors in ways which complements and/or ‘reaches the parts’ that employers may not do so readily.
2.0 Content and delivery

What should the defining features of a high quality apprenticeship be? What should a high quality apprenticeship involve or contain?

The publication ‘Education for All: The Future of Education and Training for 14-19 year olds’ published in 2009 begins with the question, “What counts as an educated 19 year old today?” Such a question is an important point of consideration in the field of apprenticeships because its answer demands a more holistic answer in addition to becoming trained and competent in a particular skills area.

Teachers and trainers have expressed strong views on what the defining features of a high quality apprenticeship should be, and has been described in previous questions. In addition, we have received a wealth of feedback on best practice that respondents have observed.

The effective utilisation of learning technology features heavily both as an active teaching, training and learning tool but also in performance monitoring and assessment.

*The use of video recording equipment in training scenarios made learners more aware of their own personal behaviors and performance; how they spoke and how their body language came across to customers. This was used to encourage and promote confidence when going for interviews and interacting with people.* – Travel and tourism trainer

*Use of video if obtained unobtrusively is excellent competence evidence. Questions can be asked and recorded throughout as long as this does not distract but rather focus. We use this extensively in both warehousing and manufacturing.* - Engineering and manufacturing technologies trainer

*We now gather 100% of our evidence using audio recordings. From a positive point of view, it enables the assessor to gather more evidence in less time, and a witness testimonial for a whole unit can be obtained in a few minutes.* – Business, administration and law trainer
Flexibility in delivery methods and responsiveness to learner and employer demand also featured strongly in feedback from teaching and training practitioners.

_The most important thing with the apprenticeships that I deliver is the ability to adapt that delivery to the individual companies and learners. It is important to me that we are able to integrate apprenticeships components in a way that makes them accessible to learners without having a detrimental impact on the business. Our ability to adapt delivery is our strength._ – Business, administration and law trainer

_We spend time with the learner and the employer at the outset defining their requirements. We then identify exactly what learning is required to achieve each of the chosen units, and plan to address this first, through a blend of guided learning and individual teaching depending of the preferred style of the learner. Once the learning has been addressed, the qualifications are then assessed in an efficient manner, such as making use of witness testimonies to ensure efficiency, rather than trying to observe something time and time again._ – Health, public services and care trainer.

_Our apprentices work with their assessors to create their own targets for completion, which is ongoing. Job roles are linked intrinsically with the design of the apprenticeship. In their first year, apprentices are salon assistants and are then promoted to technicians and then to graduates which provides a real sense of achievement and demonstrates how gaining more skills pays off at work. All our assessors work within the industry and all have huge client base so are totally up to date and know the needs of customers and the industry._ – Hairdressing trainer and curriculum manager

**Should this differ for different sectors, types of learners or types of employers?**

Most respondents to our survey agreed that, within their vocational or subject area, the design of the apprenticeships that they are involved with are appropriate for employers and for learners.
The sector where this was most profound was in agriculture, horticulture and animal care where 81 per cent of respondents from that sector agreed or strongly agrees that the design of their apprenticeships were appropriate for learners and employers.

Though still showing strong signs of agreement, the sector area which reported the highest levels of disagreement with the appropriateness of apprenticeship design for learners and employers was the health, public services and care sector where 24 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed in relation to learners and 18.5 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed in relation to employers.

These results demonstrate that, at least from the perspective of apprenticeship design, there are high levels of agreement from teaching and training practitioners across of the subject sectors that frameworks are appropriate and valued.

Any teaching and training practitioner will tell you that a personalised approach to each apprentice is important in delivering high quality teaching and training.

*A good tutor / assessor can assess the learner’s needs and react to them for personalised delivery. The employer must make it clear what the needs are of the job description so that suitable modules can be created in the first place.* – Hospitality and catering trainer.

The same can be said when working with different types of employers.

*QCF quals are great as many units to choose from to personalise the programme to the employment. Apprenticeship funding is being cut and therefore delivery costs are being cut and this impacts on the length and frequency of the visits to the work place and can have a negative effect on the quality that the learner receives especially if they need additional support and training - it makes it difficult when the funding is not ample to allow this. I feel flexibility and innovation is available to be integrated however I need to be so mindful of business costs and efficiency that sometimes this can and does limit the value added element.* – Retail and commercial enterprise trainer
How can we ensure the training offered really reflects employers’ needs?

Professional teaching and training practitioners play a vital part in working with employers and learners in assessing the needs of both parties and designing, delivering and assessing engaging and effective programmes of learning. For this to continue and develop in the future, elements which make up an apprenticeship framework must not only be rigorously and frequently quality assured but also checked against current and upcoming industry practice and developments.

IfL holds a long standing commitment to continuing professional development (CPD). One of our responsibilities to our members as a professional body is to support them in developing their teaching, training and learning practice by informing them of developments in pedagogy, e-learning technology and by sharing best practice. We know that many vocational training professionals already belong to professional bodies relating to their subject specialism in addition to IfL which focuses especially on the most effective teaching, training and learning methods in the contexts of various fields. This represents what we call ‘dual professionalism’, the principle that teaching and training practitioners maintain up to date knowledge and expertise in their vocational or subject specialism in addition to up to date knowledge and expertise in teaching, training and learning techniques, methods and practices.

This important principle of dual professionalism should support the Review in coming to recommendations relating to the responsiveness of apprenticeships in the future.

We asked teaching and training practitioners who provides them with information about future developments of the industry and found that they utilise a variety of sources. The three sources of information that feature highest amongst our respondents are, in descending order, vocational professional bodies (67.9 per cent), sector skills councils (64.3 per cent) and their employers (53.9 per cent).

All of this requires effective means of accessing continuing professional development for teaching and training practitioners, and we received concerning results when we asked respondents to tell us how
informed they felt about the future developments within the industry that they teach or train in. Some 72 per cent of respondents said that they felt quite or very informed but a significant 26 per cent that said not very or not at all informed.

Looking at these results, and evaluating the impact considered against growth in fast moving sectors of our economy, IfL believes that too many teaching and training practitioners, one in four, do not feel as up to date on the developments within the industry in which they teach or train and believe that this is an area for the Review to address.

*I worry that no commitment has been made to support and develop vocational teaching and development staff.* – Information and communication technology trainer

*Technology is developing so quickly at the present it is presents a time challenge to maintain knowledge.*

– Engineering and manufacturing technologies trainer

*I find myself too often too busy with teaching commitments to be involved in learning more myself. I’m not provided with the time to be able to do this as effectively as I know I should be.* – Engineering and manufacturing technologies trainer.
3.0 Delivering value for money and boosting access

How can we ensure value for money for government investment in apprenticeships?

IfL believes that the maximum amount of empowerment should be afforded to teaching and training practitioners in order to design, deliver and assess programmes which meet the needs of learners and employers in the most efficient way possible.

Our survey results provide some interesting results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have enough freedom and flexibility for delivery?</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that you had enough initial teacher training to enable you to deliver apprenticeships successfully?</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have sufficient CPD opportunities to enable you to deliver the apprenticeship effectively?</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there enough scope to accredit prior learning or previous experience (APL or APE)?</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IfL believes that maintaining and not losing the high levels of expertise amongst the teaching and training profession and having qualified trainers will be crucial as the numbers of apprenticeships and employers involved in delivering apprenticeships continues to grow and become more diverse.

The question of how much local flexibility and scope for innovation there is in apprenticeships is an area which IfL thinks needs more exploration to ensure that the balance is right and that where there are national requirements and/or restrictions these are in the right balance with the opportunity for trainers and employers to customize and innovate for their particular apprentices and their industry, this is especially vital as it should never be that requirements mean that training and assessment are for
yesterday’s industry, not today and tomorrow’s. IfL could explore the extent to which requirements act as a brake on apprentices being leading edge for their industry, if the Richard Review would consider this valuable.

Many members raised concerns about the current model meaning that smaller providers are unable to receive funding directly and have to sub-contract from larger lead providers. Concerns were raised about the level of funding received by the sub-contractor to effectively deliver the programme while retaining high quality of provision and success rates.

“We deliver very high quality and flexible training programmes in the work place however they are cost effective only because we are willing to go the extra mile and ensure learners achieve on an individual basis. As a sub-contractor the funding I receive really just covers the cost of training and our overheads - it is not a cash cow and we do not make very much profit, if any. The model the Skills Funding Agency has developed for sub-contractors is unfair and means that sub-contractors such as myself are subject to the whims of Lead Providers in terms of how much funding allocation they are prepared to release. Funding should be based on the quality and ability to deliver and should not be decided by a Lead Provider who at the end of the day is also a competitor.” – Senior Manager

“As a small specialist in Financial Services training, we struggled to get funding for the employers that approached us, and were frequently only given 75% of the money that had been allocated” – Senior manager

“We are a subcontractor but lead provider is taking 30% out for themselves and want a 85% success rate” – Health, public services and care manager

How can we boost employer and learner demand for apprenticeships?
IfL believes that, in addition to teachers and trainers themselves, the best advocates for apprenticeships in order to boost demand are employers and apprentices. Employers, especially small and medium sized businesses will want to see similar organisations as themselves participate successfully in the apprenticeships programme. To ensure the best advocacy possible, employers and learners should have the best experience possible and experience the best in teaching, training and learning practice.

We asked teaching and training practitioners to tell us about best practice that they have experienced in the design and delivery of apprenticeship programmes. Below is a summary of the most cited observations that we received:

- brief but regular conversations with managers to ensure they are aware of what the apprentice is learning, how it relates to their setting and also during these discussions activities can be planned to suit the context
- embedding personal, language and thinking skills (PLTS) into each taught session
- group learning - provides peer support, offer group activities more cost effectively, speakers/presentations etc.
- the need for well-established relationships between trainer, assessor, employer and apprentice
- mentors wherever appropriate and possible
- flexible delivery, adaptable to changes in work pattern as prescribed through good working relationship with employer
- ensure that apprentices feel like they are full members of the team at work, as apprentices who are happy at work learn and achieve better

Further suggestions on how to raise and maintain quality included:

- Personalising programmes with the learner and job description makes the programme relevant to learner and cost effective for employer
- Prepare learners - explain the full extent of the work involved, especially written work. Allowing for a 'cooling off period' to fully make up their mind and be committed. Design a contract, and
agree preferred 'ways of working' which is learner centered

- Always have qualified and trained staff managed by good leaders
- Utilising awarding body materials (i.e. booklets, workbooks etc.)
- Using new technologies such as e-portfolios, SmartBoard, WhiteBoard, VLEs, online tutorials, you tube, skype, onefile, digitally recorded guided discussions, virtual classroom training, where possible and appropriate to help improve training and to self study
- integrating functional skills, key skills at level of apprenticeship, support for subject specialist functional skills so they are really well contextualized, by involving specialist literacy and numeracy teachers in ways that complement and accelerate the integration of functional skills within the vocational training, plus work applications of these skills to reinforce and consolidate learning.