



MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS

A SURVEY REPORT BY THE
TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL



TRAINING STANDARDS
COUNCIL

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MAIN FINDINGS

- Modern apprenticeships have succeeded in replacing the traditional apprenticeship, securing esteem among employers.
- Nearly half of all young people in training are modern apprentices, with the programme accounting for most of the growth in work-based learning for this age group.
- Most modern apprentices are recruited directly by their employers, and 97 per cent of apprentices are employed.
- The prior educational qualifications of modern apprentices differ markedly among occupational areas, with some professions more rigorous than others in enforcing entry requirements.
- The average modern apprentice stays on his/her programme for about a year, but many individual programmes last two to three years.
- Initial assessment of prior learning and skills is fundamental to the design of an individual learning programme, but effective initial assessment is uncommon.
- Initial assessment of key skills is poor.
- About half of the modern apprentices who have additional learning needs have them identified only after they have started their training programme.
- The potential to develop individualised programmes of a length to suit each modern apprentice is not widely appreciated among employers, with these programmes being seen as difficult to plan.
- Modern apprenticeship frameworks are seen as complex and subject to too many changes, particularly among small employers.
- Many employers see modern apprenticeship programmes as being excessively rigid, failing to take advantage of the potential to 'mix and match' NVQ units from different frameworks.
- Key skills are rarely delivered in a way which is integrated with vocational training.
- The practice of teaching and assessing key skills separately, after completion of NVQ level 3, is common and leads to many apprentices failing to complete the framework.
- The funding for modern apprenticeships varies more widely than is justified by differences in local circumstances.

- The fact that employers cannot rely on a guaranteed amount of funding at the beginning of a modern apprenticeship is a disincentive to their participation.
- The use of achievement of NVQ level 3 as the trigger for a final outcome payment by TECs, rather than fulfilment of the modern apprenticeship framework, encourages non-completion.
- The lack of reliable national data on retention and achievement makes it impossible to form a comprehensive judgement about the success of the programme in meeting its objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Trainees should be selected for training programmes more consistently according to published entry criteria.
- Recruitment for modern apprenticeships should be conducted jointly between employers and training providers.
- A nationally recognised initial assessment procedure should inform the selection and design of individual training plans, including key skills.
- The foundation modern apprenticeship should be used as a stepping stone to the advanced modern apprenticeship, for those trainees requiring additional support.
- A break in training should be encouraged where there is a need for further development of practical skills or consolidation.
- Age restrictions should be removed: they are a barrier to participation in modern apprenticeship programmes.
- Fast-tracking should be more consistently available to suitable mature candidates.
- Employers should adapt the concept of graduate training programmes to provide the necessary range of suitable job roles for modern apprentices.
- National tariffs for funding modern apprenticeships in standard occupational bands should be established, weighted according to the real cost of the training.
- An entitlement to funding for the duration of training should be established for each apprentice, to promote employers' participation.

- The modern apprenticeship should be more firmly established as the work-based route for progression to higher education awards.
- Standard performance data are needed urgently to enable retention and achievement to be measured consistently.

INTRODUCTION

The traditional definition of an apprentice is one who learns a craft, is 'bound to serve' and receives instruction from his or her employer for a specified term. In England, young people have been bound as apprentices at least since 1600. Traditional apprentices signed papers called 'indentures' which bound them to their 'master' for a period of work and training, often lasting between five and seven years. Part of the value of indentures depended on the reputation of the company which issued them. Many employers still have a high regard for those who have completed an apprenticeship; they regret the passing of the traditional structure. Traditional apprenticeships, however, became unfashionable among young people in the 1970s and 1980s. It was widely believed that vocational courses in further education colleges would largely replace apprenticeship schemes.

The origins of modern apprenticeships can be found in the white paper, *Education and Training for the 21st Century*, published in 1991. This paper addressed the need to increase the number of young people entering occupational training and, in particular, the need to provide incentives for training and enterprise councils (TECs) to increase the number of trainees achieving national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 3. The white paper stressed an aspiration to create parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications. It referred to arrangements which would 'offer young people special trainee status and clear progression'. This paper also heralded the introduction of general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) which included the core skills of application of number, communication and information technology. 'Core skills' were subsequently renamed 'key skills'; they became an integral part of modern apprenticeships.

The modern apprenticeship was introduced in 1995. It was designed to recapture some of the strengths of the traditional apprenticeship. Retaining the word 'apprenticeship' in the title was seen as important in securing industry's acceptance. The most significant difference between the modern apprenticeship and the traditional apprenticeship was that it was not to be of a fixed duration. The award was to be made whenever a modern apprentice had demonstrated the necessary competence in every element of a defined

framework. Key skills became an important part of all modern apprenticeship frameworks, with each national training organisation (NTO) specifying appropriate criteria and levels to meet employers' needs.

REPORT METHOD

This report concentrates mainly on three occupational areas which have had an historical involvement with apprenticeships: construction, engineering and hairdressing. It evaluates initial assessment as the essential underpinning for individualised learning programmes, the perceptions of employers, funding and the application of key skills. It complements a range of other reports about the success of modern apprenticeships, including those produced by the Quality and Financial Audit Division of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). Information has been collected through the use of questionnaires in the three occupational areas, as well as from inspections which took place between October and December 1999. Involved in these inspections were the following numbers of modern apprentices: 330 in construction, 2,113 in engineering and 507 in hairdressing. Questionnaires were used to gather evidence from all of those employers which had modern apprentices involved in the relevant inspections. Inspection reports from 1999-2000 were used as sources of supplementary evidence of trainees' experience. Twenty additional visits to providers with substantial involvement in construction, engineering and hairdressing modern apprenticeships were undertaken by inspectors. Statistics and literature were reviewed; NTOs and employers were consulted. Sixteen TECs across all government office regions supplied information about the funding and achievements of modern apprentices.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

In the early 1990s, the number of young people in government-funded training schemes was almost a quarter of a million. During 1996-97, the intake of modern apprentices rose to nearly 50,000, while the number of young people on other training programmes fell by 15,000. The number of young people in training is now 30,000 higher than it was in the early 1990s. Modern apprentices remain in training longer than do most other young people on work-based training programmes, with modern apprentices now accounting for 47 per cent of all young people in training. The modern apprenticeship scheme has increased both the number of young people in training and the average duration of their training. For many TECs, modern apprenticeships are the largest training programmes which they offer, in terms of both the number of trainees and the number of providers and companies with which they work.

TECs have not sought to create their own brands for modern apprenticeships, as they have for other training programmes. The programme has a high status. In the early stages of the development of modern apprenticeships (and with the announcement of their expansion in 1997), TECs offered substantial signing-on fees to training providers and companies to help them to meet the targets for growth set by the DfEE. These payments were as high as £750, but have dropped significantly since 1998 to around £200. In order to meet recruitment quotas, many unsuitable candidates were taken on as modern apprentices during 1997. Many of these young people subsequently dropped out of training, without completing the framework.

Modern apprentices are recruited either directly by employers or through training providers which place them with suitable employers. Most apprentices are recruited directly by employers. Trainees are seldom assessed for their ability to be a modern apprentice. Employers interview candidates to assess their suitability as employees, rather than as apprentices. Often, training providers are not involved in recruitment. Some training providers influence employers' recruitment procedures and their equal opportunities practices. For example, in hairdressing (where most trainees are women), guidance has been provided for employers on how they might use positive images of men in their promotional literature to help to redress the traditional gender imbalance. In engineering and construction, nearly all modern apprentices are men, as are other employees; little has been done, with any evident effect, to change recruitment practices.

There are considerable differences in the prior educational achievements of recruits to modern apprenticeships among the different occupational areas. These differences result mainly from the varying demands of the respective industries, but they also reflect long-established expectations among employers. Employers in engineering are likely to have several applicants for each post. In catering, construction and hairdressing, employers usually have fewer applicants from whom to choose. Successful engineering applicants usually have four or five general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, whereas successful applicants in other occupational areas are likely to have lower academic qualifications. About two-thirds of employers do not stipulate minimum entry qualification levels, relying instead on interviews and tests to evaluate ability and aptitude.

RETENTION

Many small employers are confused by the complexities of modern apprenticeship schemes which include both NVQs and key skills. They also find the funding arrangements complex. The differences among the various

occupational frameworks and the changes made to them in recent years add to this sense that modern apprenticeships are for the larger company only. In some frameworks, modern apprentices are required to take an NVQ at level 2 before progressing to level 3; in others, they are not, but the achievement of NVQ level 2 is recognised as a standard element in the training programme. In retailing, the achievement of an NVQ level 2 is sufficient for young people to gain a higher rate of pay, and there is little incentive for them to complete a modern apprenticeship framework. In engineering, on the other hand, NVQ level 2 is not deemed adequate for skilled employment. Employers' determination to recruit substantial numbers of modern apprentices varies among occupational areas. In engineering, the modern apprentice is seen as the standard recruit for employment. In catering, construction, printing and hairdressing, most employers require only NVQ level 2 among new employees.

Nearly half of all employers concentrate their recruitment on 16-year-old school leavers, after the school summer term has finished. Having said that, considerable numbers of young people who are newly employed or who have been in employment for some time become modern apprentices. Some apprentices achieve an intermediate GNVQ at a further education college, before embarking on work-based training.

Modern apprentices, as were their traditional counterparts, are usually employees. Currently, 97 per cent of modern apprentices are employees. The remaining 3 per cent of non-employed modern apprentices are to be found mostly in social care and transport, where it is usual to undergo an introductory phase of training, before starting employment. Some companies which work with TEC direct-contracting units employ staff for a probationary period of up to six months, before placing them on a modern apprenticeship programme. This approach improves apparent retention rates on these modern apprenticeship programmes, since most young people who leave their programme do so in the very early stages. Some of those hairdressing providers using a probationary period report substantial apparent improvements in retention. A uniform approach to measuring retention would help to distinguish between improved retention which is real and that which is apparent.

The average length of time for which a modern apprentice stays on a programme is about 50 weeks, but they rarely complete it in this time. TECs report that, in some training providers, there has been a significant increase in the average length of a modern apprenticeship programme, over the last three years. The average length of stay for each occupational area also varies. For example, in retailing, the average length of stay is in the region of 40 weeks, but a modern apprenticeship in engineering usually lasts 124 weeks.

Most employers expect modern apprenticeships to last between two and three years, with a few employers expecting their apprentices to complete their programme within six months. Just a few employers anticipate that successful completion will take more than four years. Some 70 per cent of modern apprentices are aged between 16 and 19. Older modern apprentices are found particularly in business services, where there is no history of apprenticeship.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND INDUCTION

Because neither NVQs nor modern apprenticeship frameworks are time-limited, the efficiency of their delivery is largely dependent on the effectiveness of initial assessment. An accurate assessment of prior knowledge or skill, of aptitude and of basic and key skills at entry to the programme enables the employer or training provider to design an individual training plan to provide the structure for learning.

A lack of initial assessment, or poor initial assessment, is the most common weakness. Where initial assessment identifies a need for additional learning support, it is unusual for individual training plans to set out how these needs are to be met. The suitability and depth of initial assessment vary. Many training providers use a standard test for basic skills which does not relate to an occupational area. Few providers have good procedures for the initial assessment of key skills. They rely instead on basic skills tests which are not well adapted for assessing key skills. Initial assessment is often carried out as part of induction, rather than at entry. Most individual training plans list prior qualifications, but take no account of them in establishing a training plan. Previous key skills experience, and particularly that gained during a GNVQ, is largely ignored, and work is repeated unnecessarily. There are many examples of trainees who have good GCSE qualifications in English, mathematics and information technology who must, nevertheless, cover these disciplines again at the same level. Apprentices with relevant prior experience or qualifications rarely follow a fast track towards completing a modern apprenticeship framework, thereby negating one of the principal advantages of the programme.

Around half of the modern apprentices who have additional learning support needs have them identified only after they start training. These problems are often detected only when the modern apprentices perform poorly during assessment. The most common form of support is individual tuition and the use of amanuenses during written tests and examinations. Some providers offer tape recorders and video equipment to assist trainees to record, rather than to write, assessment evidence, but employers often feel that modern apprentices should not need additional support or creative approaches to help

them to gather assessment evidence. They complain of a lack of extra funding from TECs to provide additional learning support. Further education colleges which provide off-the-job training usually have good learning support services, although these are often not flexible enough to be readily available to apprentices.

Some employers do not assess with sufficient care the work which they are offering to modern apprentices, before they recruit them, in order to ensure that they will have the scope to demonstrate all of the required competencies for an NVQ. Too often, apprentices find themselves in work which fails to give them, for example, the supervisory responsibility or regular contact with customers which the qualification requires. Skilled managers overcome these problems by varying apprentices' work, giving them additional responsibilities or moving them among different departments in a company.

Induction is a vital part of any training programme; when conducted effectively, it helps apprentices to understand promptly all the elements of the programme and to come to terms with what is expected of them. Good induction also provides an introduction to safe working practices and to issues related to equality of opportunity. Many apprentices are unaware, even, that they are modern apprentices. Induction in such cases is often little more than the issuing of policy documents and completion of paperwork to fulfil the contractual demands of the TEC. Few apprentices are given a fresh induction when progressing between one NVQ level and the next, to introduce them to the new requirements of the higher qualification.

EMPLOYERS AND MODERN APPRENTICES

Modern apprenticeship frameworks are designed to provide a complete programme of learning. They comprise clearly defined points for progression, qualifications to mark the different levels of achievement and key skills at levels defined for the industry by the appropriate NTO. These frameworks give the apprentice a more comprehensive programme than does an NVQ on its own. Employers are given a plan of work; this involves them in less administration than that required if they were to put together the different elements themselves. For both apprentice and employer, the lack of a fixed-length programme can be beneficial. It allows apprentices who are more able or less able to complete training at their own pace. Many employers and some training providers do not recognise this potential benefit, however. They see the framework as being of, for example, three years' duration. This misconception lingers partly from those apprenticeships in the past which were of fixed length, but it is also a reflection of the fact that many employers find definite periods easier to plan. The pressure for predetermined length is

compounded when further education colleges supply off-the-job theory training. Most colleges still offer training in day-release sessions during the traditional academic year and sometimes with only a single entry point in September.

At its best, the working environment is an ideal place in which to learn both theory and practice in a way which is relevant and memorable. One of the most significant benefits of the modern apprenticeship is the commitment which employers must give to an extended and carefully planned learning experience for their young employees. Some employers do not fulfil their responsibility to provide planned training. They rely instead on specialist training providers to organise all of the training and assessment. Many employers do not have staff with appropriate training experience.

Some employers would like to vary or extend the modern apprenticeship frameworks to enable them to respond better to their own business circumstances. For example, in some occupations, employers would like a 'training break' after NVQ level 2, enabling trainees to consolidate their learning and gain more experience at this level, before progressing. There is nothing to prevent this practice within the framework, but many training providers discourage breaks, fearing that apprentice or employer could lose interest in training if momentum were lost. Other employers would like a wider range of optional qualifications to be included within the frameworks. Again, there is nothing to prevent an employer or training provider from adding qualifications as is seen fit. Many employers would like to be able to add or substitute, to a modern apprenticeship programme, units of NVQs or whole NVQs from other occupational areas. They believe that this 'mix-and-match' approach would enable them to deliver more relevant training. There is an irony in the fact that many employers see the modern apprenticeship, containing a unit-based NVQ, as inflexible.

KEY SKILLS

The low level of key skills attained by many young people is a major concern in many European countries. It is not a British problem alone. The European Union's white paper of 1995, *Living in the Information Age*, identified employees' development of key skills as being of major economic consequence to the whole of Europe. Key skills deficits and their remedy have been identified in the majority of member states' operational programmes. In Germany, for example, the drive to improve the competitiveness of small- and medium-sized enterprises has involved improving employees' key skills as a dominant concern. The significance of key skills in the UK was reinforced in the second interim report of the

National Skills Task Force in 1999, *Skills for Young People*. The report commented on the fundamental need to equip ‘all our people with the key skills they need for employability’. The report also noted that consultation with employers, colleges and training providers had indicated that ‘public funding and performance management systems are the main drivers of the behaviour of post-16 education and training’.

The introduction of a key skills requirement, as part of the modern apprenticeship frameworks, has been problematic. The difficulties are similar to those faced when core and key skills were introduced to other learning programmes, such as GNVQs. They fall into the following five main areas:

- confusion over the distinct meanings of basic and key skills
- the range of levels at which each key skill can be learned
- the obscure language used to describe criteria and levels
- a lack of staff expertise to integrate key skills effectively with occupational training and assessment
- recording procedures which are seen as excessively bureaucratic

For some years, employers have complained that young recruits have inadequate basic and key skills to enable them to do the job. The modern apprenticeship frameworks provide well-organised and industry-specific definitions of the key skills required of an apprentice. When initial assessment, integrated key skills training and regular assessment of progress are well organised, the programme works well. Nevertheless, relatively few employers and training providers develop key skills in a way which is integrated with occupational training. Key skills are often taught as a separate block of instruction and assessment, right at the end of a programme. Given that many young people enter work-based training in the first place because they find formal schooling inappropriate for their needs, this failure to use the modern apprenticeship structure properly is damaging to individuals’ development and blights employers’ hopes. All of the naturally occurring opportunities for extending and assessing key skills during the training period are lost. Distinct key skills assessment and record-keeping, after an NVQ level 3 is complete, become a chore for everyone.

Employers often benefit from their apprentices’ improved key skills. For example, as a direct result of apprentices’ training, employers report improvements in the handling of complaints in call centres and innovative developments in stock control and information technology. Some employers report financial savings or increased revenue from these apprentices’ work.

Key skills for modern apprentices were developed from similar work in GNVQs, but this heritage brought difficulties. The assessment of key skills in GNVQs is made mostly through the use of written assignments and students' presentations to staff. In modern apprenticeships, key skills assessment is conducted through observation of workplace activities. Further education colleges are the main providers of GNVQs. The expertise developed by their staff has been applied to work-based key skills programmes. This natural tendency to rely on experience gained in a different context has perpetuated an 'artificial' assessment regime, rather than one which is integrated with occupational assessment. Awarding bodies' external verifiers are also familiar with key skills assessment in GNVQs; some do not understand the differing demands of modern apprenticeships. Employers and training providers are often poorly advised, resulting in narrow expectation of the types of assessment evidence which may be required.

The variation among modern apprenticeship frameworks, and changes made to them, makes it difficult for many employers and training providers to remain up to date with key skills issues. Many are uncertain about whether they have the latest or most accurate information. There is a great deal of confusion and uncertainty about the introduction of Key Skills 2000 and the use of those tests set and marked externally. Training providers and employers fear that external tests will lead to even lower achievement of key skills and reinforcement of the separation between key skills and occupational skills.

Some TECs and providers work together well to produce what are often quite simple ways in which to overcome the problems encountered with key skills. For example, one TEC funds its local careers company to administer a comprehensive series of tests to ensure that applicants can cope with the level of training which they can expect to receive on a modern apprenticeship programme. These tests focus on occupational areas. They include an initial work-based test, using verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning. The results are related to standardised data from the youth population as a whole. These tests are used alongside an assessment of learning styles, personal skills and an initial assessment of each applicant's key skills ability. Combined with interviews, school reports and examination results, these test results contribute to a comprehensive personal profile for every modern apprenticeship applicant. Feedback is given to the applicant by professional advisory staff. Personal profiles are written in appropriate language; they include advice about suitable occupational areas, general abilities and learning styles, as well as an assessment of suitability for each level of NVQ. Any need for additional learning support is also identified at this stage.

Another TEC works with a national hotel chain in running its modern apprenticeship programme. Its contribution has included analysing job roles against NVQ standards and determining how key skills can be gained during normal work tasks. The evidence produced for assessment of key skills includes practical exercises related to such things as table-usage rates in a dining room and laundry requirements. This work benefits the company's efficiency and helps modern apprentices to meet the key skills standards.

FUNDING

There are significant differences in the funding arrangements which each TEC makes in contracting with training organisations and in working directly with companies, to provide modern apprenticeships. The levels of funding for the same modern apprenticeship, delivered by a different provider in a different place and funded by different TECs, vary markedly. For example, a training provider with contracts from several different TECs for engineering modern apprentices is paid £3,390 by one TEC and £10,000 by another for apprentices working alongside one another, in the same workplace and receiving the same support, off-the-job training and assessment.

Some TECs make additional payments to encourage people to train in areas of skills shortage. Extra payments of up to £3,000, for engineering modern apprentices, are common. Other TECs band occupations and make payments accordingly. Some TECs' banding systems, for example, place retailing and administration in one band, social care and hospitality in another and engineering in yet another. Other TECs operate similar banding systems, but place the occupational areas in a different order in their bands. Some TECs seek to increase recruitment by using start payments, while others gear their funding towards completion payments, to emphasise the importance of achievement.

Start payments vary between £200 and £500. Some TECs pay a conversion fee of between £50 and £300 for trainees who move from national traineeships, or other training programmes, to a modern apprenticeship. Some TECs' on-programme payments vary between £40 and £156, according to the occupational area. Other TECs have a fixed payment for all occupational areas, usually set at around £60 to £90. One TEC unit which contracts directly with companies for modern apprenticeships makes a separate payment for progress reviews; these take place at regular eight-weekly intervals. 'Milestone' payments include the achievement of NVQ level 2, level 3 and, in some cases, level 4. The payment for achievement of an NVQ level 2 is usually around £1,500, but one TEC pays only £200, when the whole framework has been completed. Payments can be made for additional NVQs

which are relevant to the main programme. In the majority of cases, these additional NVQs are in information technology or customer service.

Employers are concerned about this lack of certainty over the levels of funding which they are likely to receive when taking on modern apprentices. Next year, for example, the level of milestone payments paid by one TEC will drop from £3,400 to £2,600 for an NVQ level 3 and from £1,200 to £800 for an additional or second NVQ level 3. In another TEC, during the past two years, there have been still more extensive changes in funding arrangements. In the financial year 1997-98, its average total payments made to a training provider for under- and over-19-year-olds were £5,255 and £4,805 respectively. These figures included start payments of £750 and £300, according to group. There were no on-programme payments, and the NVQ outcome payment was £4,505. By the financial year 1999-2000, average support for a modern apprenticeship had fallen by 20 per cent. In 1997-98, there was a supplementary payment of £500 for the achievement of key skills; this was reduced to £300 the following year and then reinstated in full for 1999-2000.

The strength of the modern apprenticeship as a sustained and comprehensive training programme is compromised by TECs which use the completion of NVQ level 3 as the final outcome for payment, rather than paying for the completion of the full framework. There is a disincentive for providers and apprentices to continue with a modern apprenticeship, beyond completion of the NVQ level 3, leading directly, in some cases, to low apparent retention and achievement rates.

ACHIEVEMENTS

There are no national data showing achievement rates for complete modern apprenticeships. TECs are not required, by the DfEE, to collect these data. There is no apparent correlation between the different levels of funding and the NVQ achievement rates in different TECs. For the first time in 1998-99, interTEC tables of results showed the average number of NVQs at level 3 achieved for every 100 leavers. These data record a national average achievement of 35 NVQs per 100 leavers. This figure is higher than the number of individual trainees achieving an NVQ, since many trainees achieve more than one NVQ.

There are insufficient performance data available on modern apprentices as a group. NTOs hold data on the number of people starting modern apprenticeships in their own occupational areas, but data on leavers do not differentiate among those who leave with no qualification, those who leave

with an NVQ level 2 or level 3 and those who complete the whole programme. Similarly, most training providers keep data on achievements of NVQs for TEC-funding purposes, rather than recording modern apprenticeship achievement rates.

Without standard approaches to recording retention and achievement, little can be said reliably about the success of modern apprenticeships as a national programme or about any differences which may exist among different occupational areas or providers. What is certain is that those data which do exist undervalue the success of modern apprenticeships, because the peculiarities of funding and the separation of key skills training are incentives towards non-completion.

DIFFERENCES AMONG OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

The features of modern apprenticeships in the three occupational areas which provided the focus for this report are illustrated below.

CONSTRUCTION

- The introduction of modern apprenticeships has been popular and has encouraged a revival of the apprenticeship system.
- Many apprentices leave school with few academic qualifications, making it difficult to predict whether they will be able to achieve the full framework.
- Initial assessment is often poor and usually fails to assess applicants' occupational aptitude or their key and basic skills levels.
- Induction is usually comprehensive and well documented.
- Among employers, there is slow introduction of, and reluctance to deliver, key skills.
- There is some good key skills work in further education colleges.
- Most apprentices receive off-the-job training at further education colleges, in day- or block-release form.
- Trainees see little difference between a modern apprenticeship and achieving an NVQ alone.
- The differing demands of the construction frameworks are confusing to employers.
- Employers have little involvement in on-the-job assessment.
- There are few examples of schemes to attract women and those from minority ethnic groups to modern apprenticeships in construction.

ENGINEERING

- Frameworks include additional qualifications, taught in further education colleges, which enhance modern apprentices' knowledge and experience.
- Employers see modern apprenticeships as a good way of attracting young people into engineering.
- Many employers are insufficiently involved in training and assessment.
- Entry requirements in engineering are higher than those in other occupational areas; they are more consistently enforced.
- Most apprentices are recruited just before the beginning of the college academic year.
- Almost all applicants are given an induction; those who start outside of the main recruitment period experience a poorer induction.
- Most employers do not value the development of apprentices' key skills.
- Most work-based assessment is conducted by visiting assessors, not by employers' staff.
- Around 20 per cent of apprentices are in a job which is too narrow to allow them to cover NVQ requirements.
- There are good examples of schemes to attract women trainees to engineering.
- The proportion of apprentices from minority ethnic groups or with disabilities is significantly lower than that in other occupational areas.

HAIRDRESSING

- The modern apprenticeship system is valued by employers and is now firmly established.
- Most applicants' basic skills levels are evaluated on entry to training, often using industry-related material.
- Induction is provided for the majority of apprentices.
- Most salon work is at NVQ level 2.
- Some apprentices are in a job in which they cannot cover all of the NVQ level 3 requirements.
- There is increasing involvement of employers in on-the-job assessment.
- There is some good key skills training and assessment.

- The standing of the employer in the industry influences the value which is placed on the qualification.
- Schemes to attract men to training are common.
- Customer service NVQs are often used appropriately as an additional qualification.
- Competition work and training provided by product manufacturers add value.

THE COUNCIL AND INSPECTORATE

The Council

The Training Standards Council is responsible for the independent inspection of government-funded work-based training. Its scope includes provision currently funded through training and enterprise councils (TECs), through franchise agreements with further education colleges, as part of the New Deal initiative, with the assistance of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and in prisons. The Training Standards Council draws its funds directly from the Department for Education and Employment and the Employment Service. The Council's chief inspector reports annually on the findings of the inspectorate. The Council uses the chief inspector's report to inform the Secretary of State for Education and Employment on standards in government-funded work-based training.

The Training Standards Council has 18 members, including the chief inspector, who is also the chief executive, and members of the senior management team who are executive directors. Executive and non-executive members alike are selected from applicants for publicly advertised posts. In its recruitment procedures, the Council uses the guidelines on good practice in making public appointments. Members are drawn from industry, training organisations, education and TECs.

Terms of reference

- To advise the Secretary of State for Education and Employment on the quality of training in England offered by training providers supported by public funding.
- To oversee the development and implementation of a quality assurance framework for training providers, embracing self-assessment and external inspection.

- To recommend to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment and keep under review methods for assessing quality and standards of training provision and related methods of assessing competence.
- To receive assessment reports, from the national inspectorate, on government-funded training provision in England and elsewhere, and to advise on necessary action.
- To report annually to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, including an evaluation of the overall quality of training in England.
- To advise on other matters as requested from time to time by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

The inspectorate

The Council's operational arm is the training inspectorate, which is led by the chief inspector. Three directors of inspection are responsible for corporate and operational matters.

There are 40 full-time inspectors and six senior inspectors. They work from their homes throughout England. Their responsibilities include: leadership of inspections, which are conducted with the participation of part-time associate inspectors; leadership in matters related to the occupational areas in which they are qualified and experienced; representing the inspectorate locally and maintaining close links with TECs, government offices and Employment Service regional offices; representing the Council on professional bodies and other national organisations.



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