The Work-Based Learning Dividend
Learning from the Apprenticeship model

www.towardsmaturity.org/apprenticeships2017

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In association with

In-Focus Report
May 2017
In this report, we look at the essential elements of successful workplace learning and development to draw out the implications for apprenticeship and other work-based learning programmes. It gives employers the opportunity to re-think their approach to training and development of the skills that are often criticised to be lacking in graduates. We investigate why organisations are either supporting or concerned about the implementation of new apprenticeship standards in England, and aim to build confidence in people professionals so they can embrace the changing landscape for apprenticeships and develop new work-based learning opportunities.

Data for this report is drawn from:

- A Learning Landscape Audit with over 300 apprentices, interns and trainees gathered between October 2016 and February 2017. The survey invited them to reflect on how and where they currently learn, and the factors that motivate – or restrict – their engagement with learning. **These stats are highlighted in purple throughout.**

- Four focus groups held during February and March 2017 with C-suite executives, L&D leaders, apprenticeship providers and apprentices. Their insights are captured in the comment boxes in each chapter.

- The Towards Maturity 2016 Benchmark™ research with over 600 L&D leaders, *Unlocking Potential* ([www.towardsmaturity.org/2016benchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/2016benchmark)). *Unlocking Potential* is free to download, thanks to the support of the Towards Maturity Ambassador programme. For more information, visit: [www.towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors).

- Data from the Towards Maturity Learning Landscape™ research, gathered online during 2016 from a sample of over 4,500 workers, *The Learner Voice: Part 3* ([www.towardsmaturity.org/learnervoice](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/learnervoice)).

This In-Focus Report is free to download thanks to the support of The Open University.

The full range of Towards Maturity’s research reports is available from: [www.towardsmaturity.org/research](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/research)

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Foreword by David Willett

The fact that the nature of work and the shape of the workforce is changing, is a given. We live in a time of increasingly rapid change, operating in a business environment that is more volatile than ever before, facing significant disruption.

The introduction of the apprenticeship levy has presented organisations with yet another challenge – and the response so far has been varied. Many employers are in the dark on how to turn a liability into an asset; but the opportunity is there.

Looked at in isolation, the levy can be seen as just a tax – but to fully realise the opportunity, a much broader view is needed, one that puts learning at the heart of the organisation. This fast-paced, ‘new world’ is opening up new possibilities, often underpinned and driven by technological advancements, but only if the workforce skills and organisational culture are primed to seize them.

Never before has there been a stronger need for the ‘learning organisation’ – the organisation that truly values the development of adaptability and agility. Employers that will thrive in the future will be those who integrate learning and work to create a skilled and diverse workforce, one that can respond to changing business directions.

We understand the need and the challenge – to build and maintain high level skills, to create a learning culture, to develop self-directed learners who can apply learning directly to their work. Key to unlocking the healthy, high performing workforce you need is work-based learning.

Much can be gained – and, indeed, learned – from apprenticeships within the context of successful workplace learning. How can the principles be applied to other forms of work-based learning? How can technology better enable and enhance a truly blended learning experience? How can staff be motivated to learn and apply learning into practice? All key questions for the learning organisation.

The Open University has sponsored this piece of research with Towards Maturity to understand how to empower the self-directed learner and lead the transformation of the learning organisation. Through this research, we’ve sought to understand and learn from apprenticeships and apply those principles to developing the successful workforce of the future.

Our aim is to inform and help organisations transform their workforces into powerhouses of learners, who are motivated, driven and smart enough to not only deliver against current strategic objectives, but actually propel productivity, growth and transformation in the future.

David Willett
Director Corporate Sales,
The Open University
Fast Facts

Work-based learning offers organisations a unique opportunity to develop, nurture and grow a more qualified workforce who are aligned to their future strategy.

Employers in England are leading the way in the development of new apprenticeship standards that can offer significant benefits to both candidate and company, although many L&D leaders do not feel ready to maximise the dividend they can realise from the new system.

This report draws from survey data, interviews and focus groups with apprentices, their managers and people professionals gathered in spring 2017.

Can we characterise an apprentice ‘persona’?

Apprentices can be at any age or stage in their career, working in more or less any job role or at any level. What emerges from our research is that they are generally resourceful, self-directed, motivated and digitally confident individuals:

► 83% are motivated by being able to do their job better or faster
► 76% are excited by using new technologies in learning

They are keen to get on with their career, their current job and their colleagues. They like to learn.

► 88% seek out opportunities to gain new skills in the workplace
► 84% are happy to take online learning without prompting
► 58% are motivated by a desire to progress their career

They look for support from their manager, their mentor, their colleagues and peers – indeed building an effective internal network is an essential part of their approach:

► 89% find support from their manager essential
► 65% internal networks and communities
► 61% rely on mentoring by a more experienced colleague

However, they may need help to build the confidence to contribute to communities of practice themselves. Despite the ring-fenced time for formal learning away from the job, 45% still report a lack of time for self-study and one in five struggle to find the learning that they need in the workplace.

► 76% have agreed their learning plan with their manager
► 79% agree that their company clearly communicates the learning opportunities available to them
What are the essential elements of good work-based learning design?

Our study with over 200 apprentices reveals alignment and flexibility are key:

- **91%** like to be able to learn at their own pace
- **77%** report that online learning has a positive impact on their job performance

Mobile and social technologies are an essential part of the learning landscape

- **96%** have their own smartphone or tablet, with **65%** finding it essential for accessing learning resources
- **93%** find collaboration with colleagues and team members essential
- **70%** know how to build a personal network to help them learn

Designing effective online learning involves the user in the design process and listens and adapts the approach according to feedback:

- **74%** report that their feedback on the learning available is valued
- **43%** are consulted about the design of the most appropriate approach

The features considered important include:

- **41%** relevant and timely learning
- **36%** tests and feedback to reinforce learning
- **36%** learning in bite-sized chunks
- **35%** support from a trainer or online tutor
- **34%** recommendations on how to use what they learn in their work
- **30%** transcripts, notes or slides from online learning

Empowering learners to take control of their learning:

- **86%** report that learning is considered part of their everyday work
- **85%** feel responsible for managing their own learning and development
- **24%** want to self-direct their route through a learning programme

Benefiting from their ideas, energy and contribution:

- **68%** agree that it is easy to contribute new ideas in the workplace
- **65%** feel confident to be able to cope with change in their role or organisation

“There needs to be more awareness of work-based learning out there as my friends don’t even know they can do this!” *Apprentice*
1 Introduction

Those sharing the work-based learning dividend give out strong signals about the health and success of apprenticeships in their organisation. They are led by confident, skilled people professionals building strong future talent paths and performance.

The aim of this research is to stimulate new ways of thinking about learning innovation, delivering apprenticeships and the wider work-based learning agenda. Innovation in the use of technology – when paired with the voice of the learner themselves – can help us to redefine good practice.

Whilst the driver for this study at this particular time is the implementation of transformational UK government policy to increase the quantity and quality of apprenticeships, the findings have a wider relevance for those employers seeking to integrate formal learning into the workplace and maximise the value of their skills investment.

Organisations who focus on achieving a sustainable, high performing and healthy workforce understand the importance of identifying their talent risks and how smart investments in their talent pipeline can propel profit, productivity, growth and transformation. Future-focused talent pipelines should include a holistic and an external and internal analysis of the short, medium and long term talent landscape. Apprenticeships, aligned to the appropriate talent path, offer organisations a unique opportunity to develop, nurture and grow a more qualified workforce who are aligned to their future strategy.

Work-based learning, exemplified by apprenticeships, is a long term talent investment that can pay out sustainable dividends:

► Access to a broader and more diverse talent pool
► Higher retention rates and levels of motivation
► Social and economic advantages

Organisational leaders, people professionals and partners involved in work-based learning need a growth mindset as this arena can be complex, and at times frustrating and confusing due to the outdated perceptions of the apprentice persona, but the rewards can be significant if led and managed by knowledgeable, supported and tenacious individuals.

Change is already happening in the workplace but many are slow to catch up when it comes to recognising the value of the work-based learning proposition. The new Apprenticeship Levy in the UK can be perceived as yet another tax on...
employment: the Apprenticeship Fund as a pot into which large employers will pay large sums of money that they can never hope to recover. In this In Focus report we want to challenge employers of all sizes to maximise the benefits from re-thinking how to leverage new models of work-based learning and share the resulting dividend.

The OU has an established reputation of bringing innovation to the education market and new apprenticeship standards provide an opportunity to integrate academic and work-based learning in new and exciting ways. Towards Maturity’s benchmark research with leaders in learning and development and with learners, focuses on delivering business impact and releasing individual potential through evidence to support learning innovation. Together, we want to challenge outdated thinking, stimulate change and initiate action.

1.1 Updating work-based learning

Work-based learning (WBL) is a knowledge to competency strategy that provides learners with real-life work related experiences where they can apply behavioural and professional skills and develop their employability.

Work-based learning deliberately merges theory with practice and acknowledges the intersection of explicit and tacit forms of knowing. WBL can add significant value to the organisation if set up professionally and should be offered to both internal and external staff, prospective employees and all job roles. For employers, successful WBL should cover a number of areas and showcase their brand, employability and possible career routes.

Work-based learning programmes can be linked to a partnership, supply chain or an externally accredited course, aiming at a win-win situation where the learner’s needs and the organisation, sector and industry requirements for skilled and talented employees are met.

Work-based learning can embrace:

- Work experience
- Internship
- Mentorship
- Apprenticeships
- Co-operative partnership
- Work-shadowing
- Work-placement

Work-based learning (WBL) is often seen as a powerful vehicle for developing workplace skills and promoting productivity of the labour force. Realising the potential of work-based learning requires firms and trainees to engage in work-based learning that effectively increases productivity. Understanding the dynamics of the costs and benefits of WBL and ensuring that those are reflected in the design of WBL schemes is essential to ensure that firms provide high-quality WBL and trainees perceive WBL as an attractive career option.

OECD website, 2016
1.2 The changing landscape for UK apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in the UK represent a key plank in government strategy to boost productivity, by investing in human capital. Increasing both the quantity and quality of apprenticeship will be funded by a levy on large employers across the UK (defined as those with a payroll over £3m).¹

October 2017 marks the end of the third phase of withdrawal of the heavily-regulated framework-based apprenticeships in England (only). The remainder will be withdrawn as employers take apprentices on the new employer-defined standards initialised in the ‘Trailblazers’. This means that apprenticeships become more about the job rather than the subject area and therefore highly relevant to skills and the future workforce.

More than half (54%) of all apprenticeships started in 2015/16 were in two sectors: Business, Administration and Law and Health, Public Service and Care. Including Retail and Commercial Enterprises, the top three sectors made up almost three-quarters (71%) of apprenticeships started.² There are now over 130 standards for apprenticeship in England, covering all industry sectors, and early participation statistics indicate that Engineering and Digital Technologies make up the majority of the 4,300 ‘starts’.

Businesses are leading the way in the development. They have the opportunity with employer-defined standards to help build programmes that will seamlessly integrate into formal curriculum, HR and training strategies. Contrary to popular belief, apprentices can start at any age and at any level from Level 2 (Intermediate), 3 (Advanced) to Levels 4-7 (Higher and Degree Apprenticeships).

With a government target of 3 million new apprentices starting in the next 3 years (a doubling of current levels – noting that the last doubling took 12 years), employers both large and small are looking to leverage the levy to support their recruitment and workforce development in achievement of their primary aims for:

- Business transformation
- Business growth
- Profit growth
- Productivity improvement

This growth ambition does not differentiate between programme level, sector or location or set out quality outcomes other than those enshrined in the employer-defined standards.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/Apprenticeship-levy/Apprenticeship-levy
1.3 Learning from apprenticeships

An apprentice has a proper job and is a full employee of the organisation, selected by the same rigorous recruitment process as any other member of staff. Apprentices follow a programme of formal learning whilst ‘learning by doing’ in the workplace. Time is ring-fenced for formal training whilst practical activities help embed learning in behaviour. The learning experience is modelled on real-world situations and must be active, social and authentic.

With the emphasis on the apprentice themselves, the role of the traditional ‘master’ in the equation is taken by a number of people and technology solutions. The senior manager, line manager, team leader, colleagues with greater experience, the student peer group – all play a role in ensuring success.

For business

Employers can expect substantial benefits from apprenticeships. These benefits derive from improved labour supply, more efficient staff recruitment and retention and productivity gains from workers with the ‘right’ skills and who have embraced company values.3

Even during the programme, apprentices are also able to contribute to their organisation as their skills increase and their knowledge of the values and behaviours associated with their role become embedded in daily practice. They can be a source of new ideas and productive links to colleges and universities. Once this is evident to colleagues, they can become truly accepted as a valued and indispensable member of the team and workforce. Under the new system of government funding, employers can look to maximise mid-career development opportunities for staff as well as encouraging young people at the start of their career.

For the individual

Work-based learning can have very positive benefits for the individual: on earnings potential and subsequent employment prospects as well as qualifications and skills levels.

For the apprentice, building up real-world competence and experience through practice and application in the workplace gives them an edge in improving their future employability and the chance to build valuable relationships within and beyond the business. Funding benefits are no longer restricted by age and even the most senior staff might benefit from higher level and degree apprenticeships.

For the economy

Apprentices also deliver great value to the UK economy – one report put the value at around £1.8 billion in 2014.\(^4\) For every £1 spent, government can expect to generate an additional £26 (Level 2) to £28 (Level 3) in productivity gains and benefits reduction.\(^5\)

Yet there are still areas where there is insufficient evidence to support policy-making.\(^6\) The Centre for Cities concluded in 2016 that better knowledge could:

- support strategic decision-making as to the sort of apprenticeships that should be created in the UK, as well as where they should go
- help to make a clear case for apprenticeships in order to challenge negative perceptions of their value and relevance

We add to this debate by asking people professionals, both in the provider community and in the business, to focus on where the greatest dividends are to be made.

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**Why are employers choosing apprenticeships?**

1. Organisational leaders can mitigate a number of their future talent risks and grow the knowledge and competence of their existing managers/L&D teams and workforce

2. Apprenticeships can add significant value, diversity and professionalism (qualifications) to the talent pipeline

3. Apprenticeships can increase brand value, social and responsibility targets and attract a more diverse and qualified workforce

4. Apprentices are filling a job role, skilled up to do the jobs that are actually needed, helping to address talent shortages and tackle skills gaps

5. Learning and demonstration of competence are taking place on the job – reducing the potential disruption to the workflow of classroom training courses and maximising impact

6. The apprenticeship value proposition can include many dividends if set up well. For example, a social mobility increase, a more diverse and inclusive workforce, higher levels of engagement, loyalty and improved turnover rates. Business impact could be improvements in productivity or knowledge transfer and expertise can be harnessed to support the succession planning process

7. Smart organisations are using the apprenticeship platform to set up mutually beneficial partnerships with schools, Higher Education, Universities and appropriate institutes/bodies so they can be involved in transforming the early careers arena

8. For under-25’s, specific talent paths can be part-funded by the Apprenticeship Levy and there is no employer National Insurance contribution!

*Source: Learning Leaders Focus Group, March 2017*
1.4 Our approach

How can businesses apply the lessons learned from best practice in work-based learning to improve the outcomes for business and the individual apprentice?

The Open University has previously identified 5 key ways to maximise apprenticeships, which provide valuable advice for those in L&D just getting to grips with the implications of the changes in their organisation:

1. Align apprenticeships with business strategy
2. Conduct a skills audit
3. Take an integrated approach
4. Be diligent when choosing an apprenticeship provider
5. Engage and support employees

However, the essentials of a good apprenticeship are relevant to all staff – development based on relevant, active, social and authentic learning modelled on real-world situations. Conversely, the essential features of good workplace learning and development should be applied to all apprenticeships and work-based learning programmes.

In this report, we look at those tactics that are most highly correlated with results. Through evidence from some of the most successful learning organisations participating in the Towards Maturity 2016 Benchmark, we offer practical hints and tips for L&D leaders looking to drive results for apprenticeships and work-based learning programmes, to maximise the resulting dividend for their organisation.

Background: The Towards Maturity Benchmark

Since 2003, the Towards Maturity benchmarking process has sought to discover which organisations are achieving the best results in terms of staff impact and business impact and share what they are doing differently to achieve those results.

Benchmark reviews with over 5,000 organisations over the past 13 years, have highlighted six key areas that consistently correlate to performance.

These effective practice work streams are described in the Towards Maturity Model™. Organisations active across all six work streams are consistently achieving better business results and improved performance.

The extent to which they are adopted is measured by the Towards Maturity Index (TMI). Those scoring in the top decile for TMI – the Top Deck – lead the
way in the transformation of their formal learning strategy and in the delivery of a valued service to their business.

1.5 The challenge to people professionals

People professionals need to look to the longer term opportunities of how innovative apprenticeships can add value to a modern learning strategy. They need to intelligently engage the business, overcome the ‘perception’ obstacles and look beyond the implications of the new levy. How will they support their apprentices and integrate their off-the-job training into innovative, technology-enhanced, workplace learning?

Preparing for apprenticeship delivery

The changes in the structure and funding for apprenticeship have caught many employers unprepared. The committees involved in articulating the standards for trailblazer job families included small business representation, but gaps in knowledge have opened up about the consequences of the changes amongst those not involved in the original development. Even some large employers subject to the new Apprenticeship Levy have yet to embrace the changes and consider how apprentices might contribute within their workforce.

Top barriers for apprenticeship managers:
1. Apprenticeships are complicated and complex to run
2. Perception / stigma of apprentices in the workplace
3. End-Point Assessment
4. Slow approval of relevant standards
5. Knowing how the levy will work and how to leverage it
6. HR/L&D awareness and capability
7. Line manager capability

“Many organisations are looking at getting on the provider register.”
Apprenticeship manager

We have ploughed a huge amount of energy into looking at particular types of apprentice - people who are disenfranchised and wouldn’t necessarily come into financial services. Part of the drive is to bring in diversity and inclusion, with more customer-focused roles.”
HR Leader, Financial Services

Business leaders need to demand more from their people professionals. It is time for people professionals/L&D to step up to the challenge, embrace and drive change and offer a work-based learning experience that delivers success for the individual apprentice, and critically, for the organisation as a whole.
Are people professionals ready for new apprenticeships?

L&D leaders tell us they are not ready for the changes that took place in April/May 2017:

► Their organisation is not fully aware of the new reforms and are still reticent about embracing the changes
► Leaders are not clear on how apprenticeships fit into their learning strategy
► Some companies are seeing the new Apprenticeship Levy as a tax
► They worry about the quality and relevance of training from external providers
► They don’t know how to gain accreditation for their own internal standards or become employer-providers themselves
► Trailblazers have been a nightmare and the approval process is too slow and many are struggling to keep up with the constant changes still being made by government

The apprenticeship landscape is fragmented and perceptions are outdated:

Some student/parent/school forums, universities and business schools that companies are already linked to have a low opinion of apprenticeships, which is making them nervous.

The perception of apprentices in the workplace can be quite outdated:

► The apprenticeship ‘brand’ conjures up negative emotions
► Colleagues don’t understand what apprentices are and could be within the organisation
► Apprentices are being treated differently from other staff – and this perception is two-way with apprentices feeling under-valued in their organisation
► Apprentices look on other employees as ‘mainstream staff’

Businesses are exploring new opportunities:

► Reskilling for older members of staff
► Building partnerships with external providers

Source: L&D Leaders Focus Group, February 2017

In the next section, we present the findings from the Apprentice Learning Landscape survey to look at how they learn what they need to do their job; the technology tools and platforms they are using and the barriers they have to overcome.

Note: See Appendix for details of the new apprenticeship system in the UK, the funding system and how to get started when taking on an apprentice.
2 The apprentice persona

There is no one-size-fits-all delivery model that can both integrate the new apprentice into the workforce and ensure the most effective work-based learning and development programme.

2.1 Who is the typical apprentice?

The norm where the apprentice is likely to be the newest, youngest member of staff, arriving fresh from school or college with little work experience, is being overturned by the new model in which a funded apprenticeship is open to anyone over 16.

An apprentice is aged 16 or over, combining working with studying for a work-based qualification – from GCSEs or equivalent up to degree level. They can be new or current employees.

https://www.gov.uk/take-on-an-apprentice/overview

Apprentices share certain traits in terms of skills, motivation, concerns and confidence that people professionals need to take into account in order to design the most effective learning programme.

2.2 The apprentices taking part in this study

Certain defining characteristics emerge from our research that are related to the demographics of age, gender or overall time with company. Compared to learners in general, the apprentices taking part in this study are:

- Likely to be new to their role – 65% of our sample have been in post for less than 6 months (15% across our Learner Voice 3 sample as a whole)
- New to their company (46% have been in their organisation for less than 6 months vs 8% across the sample as a whole)
- Under 30 (91% vs 32%)
- Less likely to work at home on a regular basis (19% vs 26%)
- Less likely to have any manager or team leader responsibility (17% vs 45%)

Participants represent a broad range of job functions including customer service, sales, IT, finance, HR and company specific functions.

The majority of this sample are following a 2-3 year accredited apprenticeship programme, with approximately one-third working towards a Level 2 or 3 qualification; one-third working towards a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship and one-third working towards professional qualifications.

Figures based on a sample of over 5,000 learners taking part in a Learning Landscape survey during 2016 and reported in Learner Voice 3

www.towardsmaturity.org /learnervoice3
2.3 Digital confidence

L&D leaders are generally confident that the use of technology-enabled learning has had a major impact in their organisation. Towards Maturity Benchmark data indicates the degree of improvement they have measured. However, too often trainees on work-based learning programmes undertake their formal learning face-to-face in a classroom – away from the workplace not only in location, but also in days or blocks of time and isolated from the innovative technology channels supporting workplace learning and development.

Apprentices, like most learners, are excited and motivated by the opportunities that technology can offer for learning and development. Those taking part in this study are digitally confident and skilled; comfortable using mobile devices and frustrated when IT systems let them down:

- 76% are excited about using new technologies for learning
- 84% are happy to take online learning without prompting

Modernising learning through technology can deliver:

- 15% faster time to competence
- 16% more qualifications
- 21% faster study time
- 27% faster delivery time

Source: Towards Maturity Benchmarks gathered from over 800 organisations
69% are motivated by using technologies that allow me to network and learn with others (61%)

42% report that the speed of the IT connection is critical for a smooth and successful learning experience

Only one in ten report that lack of, or unsuitable IT equipment is a barrier to their learning. However, it is a false assumption that apprentices are using technology to the exclusion of other methods.

2.4 Approaches to learning: are apprentices any different?

In our Learning Landscape study, we explore the sources that people are finding essential or very useful to learn what they need to do their job. For many of the younger apprentices, their school or college approach to learning still influences their style of learning in the workplace:

- 96% learn by asking questions
- 91% take mental or written notes

Even when learning independently online, many are still looking for tutor support – 35% look for support from their trainer or online tutor to ensure success.

Building a support network

Apprentices find collaboration with other team members the most important factor to learn what they need to do their job. They are sociable and social learners, keen to work beside and learn from more experienced colleagues.

- 93% find working in collaboration with other team members essential or very useful (86%)
- 89% support from my manager (78%)
- 78% support from my mentor/coach/buddy (58%)

Apprentices are more likely to be harnessing their personal and professional networks than most. They are less likely to draw upon external resources, looking first to the internal tools and people on hand for support and advice:

- 65% internal networks and communities within the business (42%)
- 42% external networks and communities (38%)

However, it may be a mistake to assume that all apprentices know how to make the best use of opportunities for collaboration and are confident to share their knowledge – and their problems:

- 15% contribute regularly to webinars, discussion rooms, blogs or internal social network and communities
Apprentices however, are less likely to be talking about the courses they are on and sharing their notes than the wider staff population. Although the percentages posting to social media sites about their learning programme remain low, at least one in eight will read postings and recommendations by others.

- 15% use social media to find out what others think about a course (24% all)
- 15% use social media to collaborate and ask questions with peers about courses (18%)
- 11% value recommendations from others about courses (31%)
- 5% use social media to tell others what they think about a course (15%)

In comparison with all learners, our sample of apprentices were less likely to organise their references and reflect on what they have learned.

Table 1: How do apprentices approach learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you approach your own learning?</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I curate topics that interest me and file for future reference</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek out opportunities to gain new skills in the workplace</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make time to reflect on what I have learned</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of this reticence may be due to a lack of confidence or skills:

- 70% know how to build a personal network to help them learn (63% all)
- 45% would maybe share if they had the opportunity (41%)
- 9% would feel uncomfortable sharing their knowledge (9%)

This, in an environment where two out of three apprentices (68%) find learning through trial and error as essential part of their development.

“There is a huge opportunity for networking – both inside the company and with other apprentices externally.”

Apprentice

70% know how to build a personal network to help them learn

“If I can answer a question to help someone I will, but I don't have the time or knowledge to pass on to the masses.”

Apprentice
Figure 4: Learning methods that apprentices find most useful to help do their job

Social and collaborative learning
- Working in collaboration with other team members: 54% Essential, 39% Very useful, 6% Somewhat useful
- Support from my manager: 57% Essential, 32% Very useful, 8% Somewhat useful
- Support from my mentor/coach/buddy: 46% Essential, 32% Very useful, 4% Somewhat useful
- Internal networks and communities: 27% Essential, 38% Very useful, 26% Somewhat useful
- Professional networks and communities outside of business: 13% Essential, 29% Very useful, 34% Somewhat useful
- External blogs and news feeds: 5% Essential, 18% Very useful, 45% Somewhat useful

Learning through formal courses and events
- Classroom courses: 20% Essential, 42% Very useful, 28% Somewhat useful
- Self-paced eLearning courses: 15% Essential, 38% Very useful, 37% Somewhat useful
- Formal education courses (e.g. College-based): 25% Essential, 36% Very useful, 26% Somewhat useful
- Taking part in publicly available online courses (e.g. MOOCs, Coursera, Lynda.com): 7% Essential, 30% Very useful, 35% Somewhat useful
- Live online learning (e.g. virtual classroom, webinar): 14% Essential, 34% Very useful, 34% Somewhat useful

Self-directed learning
- Google or other search for web resources: 37% Essential, 42% Very useful, 18% Somewhat useful
- Internal company documents: 22% Essential, 37% Very useful, 34% Somewhat useful
- Job aids/checklists: 22% Essential, 44% Very useful, 29% Somewhat useful
- Video clips/podcasts: 12% Essential, 34% Very useful, 37% Somewhat useful
- Games and simulation: 9% Essential, 24% Very useful, 30% Somewhat useful
- Books/eBooks: 14% Essential, 24% Very useful, 43% Somewhat useful
- Trial and error: 31% Essential, 37% Very useful, 24% Somewhat useful

The importance of mobile
- Being able to access any of the above from my mobile device: 27% Essential, 39% Very useful, 20% Somewhat useful
In 2016, fewer than one in five L&D professionals was aware of how their learners were using social media outside of their influence, to share ideas. The proportion encouraging learners to use collaborative tools to solve problems to build knowledge resources was even lower. This is counter-intuitive in an age where nine out of ten staff are using third party sites such as YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram to communicate and share in their personal lives on a regular basis.

No doubt there are many classroom trainers faced with a new curriculum who would concur with our research findings that 76% of apprentices report that they like to learn from teaching or explaining to others.

Although two out of three learners know how to build a personal network to help them learn and over nine out of ten find collaboration essential for learning what they need to do their job, most apprentices are also comfortable to learn online on their own without further support with only 16% looking for online chat or forums as part of online courses.

- 21% believe that collaboration with other learners is an essential element in smooth and successful online learning
- 28% publish curated content to share with others
- 16% want an online chat/help or forum facility

"I want to share my experience and help others.” Apprentice

![Figure 5: Social media sites used by apprentices](image-url)
Mobile learning in practice

Today's self-directed learner is tech-savvy, equipped with at least one mobile device that they are using at work. 96% of apprentices in this study have their own mobile tablet or smartphone.

- 65% find accessing learning resources from their mobile essential (27%) or very useful (39%)
- 43% use their mobiles to access knowledge and information to help them do their job better:

In practice, only 2% of the apprentices in our sample are provided with a tablet by their work, although 57% were using a work mobile phone.

Figure 6: Mobile devices used to access resources at work

However, our learning landscape survey shows there is considerable reluctance for learners of all ages to mix work-related activity with their personal life. So across the workforce as a whole (indicated by ‘All’ in Table 7 below), potentially 52% - and at least 30% - of staff might benefit from having access to a work device to be able to download and access work-related resources when they need them.

Table 2: Those not using their own mobile to access work-based resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don't know what resources are available to me</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to keep my work and personal life separate</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't want to pay any extra fees or use my monthly data allowance for work</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, but I would be happy to do so if the right information was available through my mobile device</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accessing learning on the go

With the widespread use of mobile devices, the times when colleagues can access learning resources or work collaboratively with others has extended too. 25% of apprentices check/use work-related apps and websites whilst travelling to or from work and 33% check or use them at evenings or weekends.

Most importantly, mobile devices give colleagues the ability to access information at the time when they most need it:

- 61% access work-related content at the time and point when they need them most
- 43% access work-related content in response to alerts of updated information.

Using e-Portfolios

Across the 2016 Benchmark, only 15% of organisations are using e-portfolios. They are popular with both the Apprentices and their Managers:

“e-Portfolios are the best fit for this type of learning and capturing the standard has been met e.g. videos, pics, voices.”

“Line managers are finding e-Portfolios really motivating and want them for all their staff.”

“ePortfolios are so easy and accessible.”

Source: Interviews with Apprenticeship Managers
Lack of somewhere appropriate to study
Lack of, or unsuitable IT equipment
Unreliable/slow IT infrastructure
Learning objectives not made clear
Uninspiring learning content
I can’t find what I need
Learning content is not relevant to me
Lack of time for self-study
Lack of support from line manager

2.5 What is getting in their way?

Many young apprentices set out on this pathway however, without the help and support they need from parents, teachers and careers advisors. Most apprentices enjoy the luxury of having ring-fenced time for study, although a worrying 45% still report that they lack study time. A lack of inspiring learning content is giving similar cause for concern.

“My teacher looked horrified when I said I was applying for an apprenticeship.”

“Teachers only know about University and they don't promote apprenticeships yet – maybe once they have [worked with] apprentices, they will. None of my teachers were able to help me.”
Learning from the Top Deck

Top Deck organisations are not only using learning technologies in higher proportions than the rest of the sample, they are also not afraid to experiment and use a wider variety of tools to meet learner needs.

► 100% Mobile devices (86% average)
► 97% Allow staff to use social media (86%)
► 90% Job aids (70%)
► 67% Use learning communities (44%)
► 63% Virtual classrooms (39%)
► 58% Skills diagnostic tools (29%)
► 52% include game-based elements (e.g. badges and leaderboards) in design (26%)
► 46% Competency management systems (34%)
► 31% e-portfolios (15%)

The Towards Maturity Benchmark indicates that a clear policy for Bring Your Own Device, influenced by those in L&D, is a characteristic of high performing learning organisations (69% vs 31%).

In the next chapter, we explore how a better understanding of the self-directed learner influences effective work-based learning design. We look at the essential elements of good workplace learning and development to build a high quality learning experience.
Apprenticeship on a tablet for the Royal Signals Corp

The Royal Corps of Signals is modernising its apprenticeship delivery as part of their ‘Leaders in the Digital Age’ re-branding strategy. With over 1800 apprentices each year across 22 campuses they have new apprentices starting every week as soon as they have finished their Basic Army Training.

The Army recognise that most youngsters starting out on their Army career are digitally literate and living in the age of smartphones and social media, so they have revolutionised their approach to apprenticeship training. They have transformed the old-style classroom training with the resultant ‘bored, uninvigorated learners’ of 3 years ago, into a modern, digitally-enabled programme that has recently achieved an ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted assessment.

Military instructors have also been trained in new methods and are fully accredited. Training quality has increased through embracing digital technology methodologies. As a result, trainees are more invigorated, enthused and better skilled. By offering clear promotional pathways linked to annual training and achievement at higher levels, soldiers will stay longer with the Army and be better skilled to re-join the UK workforce when they leave.

All Royal Corps of Signals apprentices are given a tablet, pre-loaded with mandatory and elective learning content for a raft of accredited qualifications. The tablet also holds their assessment evidence in an e-portfolio, with the master copy shared with the training provider. Apprentices can use their tablet to access the Army website, Defence Training VLE’s and view Regimental Orders. They use social media for specific purposes such as visiting forums with an apprenticeship focus. It also proves the easiest way to contact apprentices and gather feedback through surveys. The tablet is introduced as part of the Functional Skills ICT induction training in the first few weeks of trade specialist training, so that the apprentice quickly develops the skills to make the most of the learning resources it holds.

Source: Interview with Apprenticeship Manager, Royal Signals Corp
25% of organisations have increased self-directed learning through the use of technology
3 Supporting the self-directed learner

In this section, we focus on tapping into the motivation of today’s self-directed learner. Empowering learners through involving them in programme design; offering flexible and accessible programmes and excellent communications at all stages.

Successful organisations are providing appropriate support, ensuring resources are in place and easily accessible, and empowering staff to manage their own learning. Apprentices and learners undertaking other work-based learning programmes need be treated no differently.

Increasingly, as more existing staff embark on work-based learning programmes, the responsibility for their programme design will be shared between L&D and the Apprenticeship Manager/Training Provider.

Across the 2016 benchmark as a whole, 96% of organisations want to increase self-directed learning, but only 25% have achieved this goal.

32% of people professionals agree that self-directed learning is common practice in their organisation (rising to 51% in the Top Deck).

The self-directed learner understands their own needs and will take the initiative for learning. They are well motivated and will identify and access the resources they need to help themselves.

Figure 10: The self-directed learner

- 83% want to be able to do their job faster and better (work-related)
- 52% like to learn just for personal development (work-related)
- 86% know what on-the-job support they need
- 79% know what learning they need to do their job
- 85% are responsible for managing their own development
- 70% quickly put things they have learned into practice
- 80% know how to access the on-the-job support they need
- 78% know how to access the learning they need
- 65% find access to learning via mobile essential

Source: Apprenticeship Learning Landscape

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3.1 Increased self- and business awareness

Ensure learners understand their role and contribution

The fact that the apprentice is undergoing intensive training away from their day-to-day job for at least 20% of their time does not change their desire to make a valued contribution to their organisation. Indeed, this is often embedded in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours in the new apprenticeship standards.

For example, the standard for an LGV Driver requires that the apprentice ‘Takes ownership for own performance and training, and proactively keep up to date with industry developments; makes recommendations for improvement where relevant’.

A Food Technologist requires ‘Self-development: proposes objectives to support the business, seeks learning, drives the development of self and others’.

A Plumbing Technician must ‘Take responsibility for own judgements and actions’ and ‘Demonstrate drive and energy in fulfilling requirements of role’.

Can we assume that those already in post in these roles meet the new standards for their job?

Evidence would suggest that L&D often underestimate the degree to which learners understand their contribution to organisational performance. This places the onus on L&D professionals to reflect on their own role in apprenticeship programme planning and design.

Table 3: Learning aligned to business goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The L&amp;D perspective</th>
<th>The apprentice perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54% agree that staff understand how their work is linked to organisational performance</td>
<td>87% understand how their job contributes to the organisation’s overall performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% agree that learning supports the skills the business needs</td>
<td>84% agree their company clearly articulates the standards expected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Motivation for learning

Apprentices are keen to take ownership of their learning and development, both to improve their performance in their current job and to advance in their chosen career. We asked specifically, “What motivates you to learn at work and what motivates you to learn independently?”

Above all, they are motivated to learn at work by being able to do their job better and faster (83% vs 69% all). They are also keen to advance their qualifications and gain promotion.
Compared with the average, they are:

- Highly motivated by achieving certification/qualifications (74% vs 40%)
- Keen to earn more money (73% vs 40%)
- Motivated by a desire to progress their career (58% vs 26%)

**One in two** apprentices is motivated by personal development – they simply like to learn (52% vs 65%). The top motivators are shown in Figure 11 on the following page.

Apprentices give a range of reasons for opting for work-based learning rather than continuing with their formal education at college or university:

1. **Financial**: those taking the university route often start their career in debt
2. **Benefits**: apprentices are full employees in their company, and entitled to all the same benefits as any other employee – and that includes pay and holidays
3. **Real-world skills**: built up through practice and application in the workplace
4. **Contacts**: building valuable relationships within and beyond their business
5. **Access**: to experts in business as well as academia
6. **Career**: improving future employability with practical on-the-job experience

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**What issues do apprentices face as they get started?**

**Perception and stigma issue:**

“Apprenticeship is seen as a poor, lower rate career route than Uni.”

“Poor perception and no knowledge at my school.”

“Perceptions can be negative for some people at work.”

“No advice from parents, school or HE/college.”

“My colleague told me to leave when I said I wanted to become an apprentice!”

“Parents need to be educated – if they went to University, they want their children to go to University too, but if not they are OK with it (apprenticeships).”

**Support at the selection stage:**

“I passed the interviews but I needed more support as I had never done anything like this before.”

“I chose what I wanted quickly and was pleased to be accepted but I did not get enough advice on thinking about the actual ‘job’ I wanted at the end.”

“I wish I had gone for a Degree Apprenticeship now or something that allowed me to move to this later.”

“I was unsure what course to study at University and began to apply for two. I decided it was too much of an investment when I was so unsure, so I would use the work experience and apprenticeship to find out what suited me best and take an alternative pathway into the office.”

*Source: Interviews with apprentices, March 2017*
Figure 11: Factors motivating apprentices to learn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Work-related</th>
<th>Personal or Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To keep up with Continuous Professional Development</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve my qualifications</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For general career progression</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet a deadline</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enable me to earn more money</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To complete mandatory learning for compliance purposes</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep up with new technology</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to do my job faster and better</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be eligible for promotion</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not motivated by any of these factors</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just for personal development, I like to learn</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why are students choosing Apprenticeship over University?

“I was worried about debt that’s why I chose this route to get my degree.”

“Salary and career prospects are very important to me but it’s not always easy to know who to talk to.”

“Planned career pathway; lots of opportunity to develop and the staff are very qualified - making them good teachers.”

“An apprenticeship provides more experience in the career I want to pursue without the university fees.”

Source: Interviews with apprentices, March 2017
51% of apprentices are motivated to learn outside work for their own personal interest with 16% currently learning online outside their apprenticeship programme. Career advancement is important, and even with such a high proportion of this sample relatively new to their organisation, many already feel ready for the next role and a new challenge.

Figure 12: Proportion of apprentices that feel ready for the next role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time in role</th>
<th>New to role</th>
<th>Established in role</th>
<th>Ready for the next role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months-1 year</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attitudes to learning at work

Apprentices are keen to get on with their career, their current job and their colleagues. They haven’t yet developed the jaded mindset so frequently observed amongst those faced with yet another round of compliance training. They like to work to a deadline and keep up with their CPD. They like any online learning to include tests and feedback to reinforce their learning.

Table 4: Factors motivating apprentices to learn at work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation factor</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To complete mandatory learning for compliance purposes</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet a deadline/pass an assessment</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep up with Continuous Professional Development</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, as with all learners, they want to learn in the company of others and to enjoy recognition when things are going well:

- 70% strongly agree or agree that recognition that they have completed online learning programs is important to them (60% all)
They are more interested in promotion, career progression, CPD, qualifications and increasing their earning potential. Indeed, many of them select an apprenticeship route for financial reasons.

- 61% agree the online learning available will help them pursue personal interests (40%)
- 84% can see how online learning opportunities available can help further their career (69%)

Knowing the factors that motivate their learners can help L&D proactively employ strategies to increase motivation, staff satisfaction and ultimately, staff retention. Technology can offer a range of under-used solutions that can be productively explored to provide feedback and reinforcement, although current take-up is relatively low. In the 2016 Benchmark:

- 22% of organisations use technology to support learners in gaining business-related qualifications (49% in the Top Deck)
- 22% reward or recognise learner achievement (41%)

3.3 Empower learners: help them to help themselves

During their induction, most apprentices will work with their employer/line manager and training provider to draw up a personal learning plan. Whilst four out of five apprentices in this study do indeed have such a plan, this proportion is the same across the whole workforce.

- 78% have a clear personal plan about what they want to learn and why (72% all)
- 76% have agreed their learning plan with their manager (71%)

On average, 52% of all employees have a personal learning and development plan – at least so far as L&D leaders in the 2016 Benchmark are aware.

Given the effort many providers and apprenticeship managers in the workplace make to ensure that every apprentice has a learning agreement at the start of their programme, the fact that almost one in four report that learning objectives are not made clear is surprising.

L&D can be the enablers, the facilitators and the hidden activists that make things happen for the learner. However, the low level of perceived influence of L&D in the figure below can actually indicate success, for when learning is successfully embedded in every aspect of everyday work, the role of L&D is not about recognition or influence.

Indeed, for 86% of apprentices, learning is simply considered just a part of their everyday work.
Involve learners in learning design

The elements of good learning design can be quite subjective and will vary according to the audience, their needs at that particular moment and the skills, time and budget for development available. What most commentators would agree on however, is that flexibility, personalisation, and a blend of approaches, tools and methods are all part of the design mix. The learner may not always know best, but will certainly have strong views on what works for them – and what does not.

Back in 1980, Knowles went a step further and favoured use of a collaborative teaching model that involves the learners as partners.

- 43% agree that they are consulted about the design of the most appropriate learning approach
- 74% feel that their feedback on the learning available to them is valued

Across the 2016 Benchmark:
- 37% involve end users in learning design (77% in the Top Deck)
- 34% encourage learners to organise their own personal learning strategy (64%)

Table 5: Stakeholders involved in learning design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>2016 Benchmark Average % of organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter experts</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom trainers</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Increase flexibility: improve access to learning

Improving access and flexibility is one of the first benefits reported by organisations as a result of modernising their learning strategy through technology.

Compared to the rest of the sample, apprentices are more likely to not only know what, but also know where to find the learning they need.

Table 6: Improving access and communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How easy is it for you to learn in a way that suits you? % agree or strongly agree with statement</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know what learning I need</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to access the learning I need</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what on-the-job support I need</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to access the on-the-job support I need</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communicate the learning opportunities

One in four learners report that they can’t find what they need for learning. A similar proportion do not think learning communications are clear enough. Whether this is because of the degree of support they receive or because of their ‘can-do’ attitude is unclear, but they are more positive than most about the clarity of the communications they receive.

Across the Learning Landscape as a whole, older workers are less likely to agree that communications are clear. There is therefore a danger that older workers can get left out of new opportunities if it is assumed that they already are fully trained to do their job.

Figure 14: Learning opportunities are clearly communicated

91% of learners like to be able to learn at their own pace

79% agree their company clearly communicates the learning opportunities available to them (54% avg.)
Ensure learners can find what they need

There are so many excellent resources online and with 79% finding Google or other online search essential or very useful to find what they need, the role of L&D is shifting from resource provider to resource curator.

With time in short supply, anything which can signpost the most useful resources, break learning down into manageable chunks and allow them to dip in and find the information they need at that point of time will be welcomed by learners:

Across the 2016 Benchmark:

► 13% of organisations have content curation strategies in place to help staff make sense of the resources available (51% in the Top Deck)
► 22% provide micro-learning of 5 minutes or less (64%)

Ensure learners can access learning at the point of need

Providing a choice of quality relevant learning resource needs to go hand-in-hand with ensuring that learners have the time and technology to access them at the point of need.

► 29% agree that learners can determine their own path through a programme of learning (49%)
► 60% allow learners to access learning resources at any time (82%)
► 37% allow learners to choose places that are convenient to them for learning (66%)

“I feel empowered and trusted to be given time out to complete self-improvement – the choice is a bit disconnected though as our course has changed part way through but we think it will be OK.” Apprentice

In the next chapter, we consider how to create a ‘connect experience’ with learners, how L&D can increase learner experience impact, engagement and loyalty and improve the entire learner journey.
Learning from the Top Deck

Work-based learning embedded in workforce planning

► 74% integrate succession planning into their learning strategy (27%)
► 69% define the competences for each role in conjunction with senior managers (39%)
► 89% integrate learning and development into their performance management processes (43%)

Alignment to business and strategic goals

Top Deck organisations ensure that learning is aligned to business and strategic goals and reflects the priorities of the business

► 92% agree that everyone on the L&D team understands the strategy, plans and priorities of the business (59%)
► 92% agree that learning supports the skills the business needs (65% rest of sample)
► 85% agree that staff understand how their work links to organisational performance (54%)
Elements of a successful apprenticeship

► Organisational leaders and people professionals are knowledgeable and aware of the apprenticeship arena, opportunities, challenges and agree a united proposition

► External and internal partnerships are created and best practice/measures agreed

► Leaders and people professionals are upskilled and set up for success to lead/learn, adapt the apprenticeships and business impact targets

► The apprentice experience is set up to add value e.g. a holistic experience planned for the life of the apprenticeship and beyond that includes contract / pay / job profile / policies / career path

► Apprenticeship research, engagement, governance, learning design/assessment planning and reporting/tracking are integrated into the organisation’s learning strategy

► Apprenticeship talent paths are embedded in workforce planning – and an integral part of the talent pipeline strategy

► Roles and responsibilities are clear – both for the apprentice themselves but also for their support network - especially when training and assessment are divided between internal and external providers

► Good support from the existing workforce – including line managers and other team members

► Learning is high quality and appropriate to achieve the professional standards e.g. modern, accessible, agile and tailored in content and design

► Balance of on- and off-the job activities – but all supporting the improvement of workplace performance

► Significant new learning – leading to end point assessment

► Reflection on and gathering evidence of real-world activities that demonstrate progress

► Long term career opportunities and clear progression routes – on entry and exit to the programme

► Support, pastoral care and mentoring – to help the apprentice balance the demands of work, life and study – vital not only for the younger apprentice starting their first job but for the existing workforce too

Source: L&D Leaders Focus Group February 2017
85% of apprentices feel responsible for managing their own learning and development
4 Improving the learner journey

Top performing learning organisations are supporting the entire learner journey – from initial recruitment onwards. Personalising the learning experience, harnessing line and senior manager support and ensuring performance support is in place at the point of need, lead to better integration of learning in the workplace.

Self-directed learners are looking to manage their own learning and development although two out of three L&D professionals believe that their learners do not have the skills to do so.

4.1 Personalise the learning journey

Learning habits are formed as the first contact with the company is established. Supporting recruitment and induction processes with technology sets the expectation that technology will be used routinely to scaffold and reinforce the learning process.

- 20% use learning technologies to reinforce the way they recruit and onboard new staff (54% in the Top Deck)
- 56% of induction training is e-enabled (89%)

Fewer than one in ten organisations, however, are using diagnostic tools to help tailor training to individual need at the planning stage, so the vast majority will be following the same training and assessment programme.

Whilst most learners are happy to be more passive and be channelled to and through learning programmes, 24% want to be able to self-direct their route through the programme and take greater responsibility for their learning.

4.2 Maximise support from networks

Engage with classroom trainers

Building a close relationship between training providers and classroom trainers and those managing the workload in the workplace depends on clear communications and a shared responsibility for building effective learning.
Across the 2016 Benchmark sample:

- 25% involve classroom trainers in engaging learners with technology-enabled programmes (67% in the Top Deck)
- 22% train classroom trainers to extend learning beyond the classroom (72%)
- 31% actively build on e-learning courses in their face-to-face training (82%)

### Gain the full support of line managers

Line manager support is critical to success, with 89% finding support from their line manager essential or very useful to learn what they need to do their job (78% across the sample as a whole). However, at least one in five apprentices in this study are not getting the support they need to succeed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My manager discusses the learning objectives with me before I start any formal learning</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager expects me to apply the learning afterwards</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager supports me afterwards in the consolidation of learning in the workplace</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indeed, it would appear that line managers are placing very similar expectations on their apprentices as on other members of their team, but are not always getting involved at every stage of their learning journey as the initial apprenticeship Learning Agreement would demand.

- 64% expect managers to take responsibility for developing the skills of their staff (90% in the Top Deck)
- 15% of managers provide active support in the application of learning in the workflow (51%)

Apprentices themselves report higher levels of line manager support than these figures suggest: 74% of Apprentices reporting that their manager supports them in the consolidation of learning into the workplace – still leaving one in four apprentices with less support than they might expect.

“Business stakeholders needs a lot of hand-holding, awareness and guidance to shift their mindset – the perception is that they will add complexity or lower productivity due to the calibre of Apprentices.”

**Apprenticeship Manager**
According to recent research from the UKCES, 48% of employers don’t actually train their managers\(^9\), and yet these are the most influential people for most apprentices. Productive and high performing staff become ‘accidental’ managers – especially in smaller companies. People professionals need to address any lack of manager preparation or confidence by providing appropriate skills and resources to help them fulfil their role.

Across the 2016 Benchmark, just 26% equip line managers with resources so their teams get the most out of technology enabled learning (59%).

“Line managers are the key to success for apprentices, but often forgotten about by employers. For example, they are not supported enough or given enough extra staff to cope with the demands of apprenticeships.” *Apprenticeship policy-maker*

### Secure buy-in from senior managers

Addressing the talent deficit is high on the agenda for senior managers and professionalising the workforce is as important aspect of this. People professionals are best placed to inform and advise about new and innovative solutions: encouraging young people into a career; enabling existing staff to progress with mid-career development opportunities; developing links to professional bodies; widening participation to address gender and diversity issues; breaking down silos of occupational segregation that perpetuate inequalities; making links with universities, colleges and business schools – along with the new management apprenticeship standards.

Emerging technologies are driving skills growth, but many senior managers across the 2016 Benchmark are less than enthusiastic partners in learning:

- 29% of managers agree that learning technologies deliver additional business benefit (55% in the Top Deck)
- 31% are involved in identifying and setting the business metrics/KPIs for learning (79%)
- 39% are involved in defining the competences for each role (69%)
- 39% take training-related decisions (56%)
4.3 Improve performance support

Across the apprentices in this study, just 57% agree that L&D professionals understand and are able to provide help with their performance needs. This is a wake-up call to L&D leaders to ensure that those on work-based learning programmes have access to the same tools and support as everyone else.

Train individuals to be line coaches or mentors

Mentoring is important for two out of three apprentices:

- 61% rely on mentoring by a more experienced colleague
- 78% of apprentices find support from their mentor/coach or buddy essential or highly useful to help them learn what they need

Coaching and mentoring are not universally available however, and only half of organisations taking part in the 2016 Benchmark use it. For 17% of learners across the sample as a whole, coaching and mentoring are the most important method that ‘would be useful if it were available to me’.

Reinforce off-the-job learning in the workplace

Given that the work-based learner is likely to be studying, at least for some of their time with a third party training provider, it is critical to appreciate what and when they are learning and how this knowledge can be transferred into work activity to build the necessary competences.

- 34% of apprentices are looking for online learning to include recommendations on how to use what they learn in their work (15%)

However, it is not only the apprentice that might be training away from the workplace – many organisations still have a heavy emphasis on face-to-face classroom-based learning. Indeed, across the 2016 Benchmark, 56% of learning is conducted face-to-face only.

It becomes all the more important when some of the underpinning knowledge is ‘delivered’ away from the workplace, that timely reminders are in place to help embed the learning in behaviour.

In the next chapter, we explore how learning can be integrated into work and look at the factors that promote a learning culture in the organisation.
Learning from the Top Deck

**Top Deck** organisations are involving stakeholders at every stage, from design onwards.

- 90% expect managers to take responsibility for developing the skills of their staff
- 90% of managers recognise the value of on-the-job learning
- 90% of senior managers demonstrate a commitment to learning

They recognise that learning is occurring all the time, in places convenient to the learner, and understand the performance support systems that are set up to help them at the point of need.

- 87% understand the support systems available to staff (42%)
- 47% use available support systems to promote self-reliance, not dependency (21%)
- 64% encourage learners to organise their own personal learning strategy (34%)

In the **Top Deck**, coaching and mentoring are common practice, forming an important part of performance support.

- 95% agree that coaching and mentoring are an important part of their work culture (49% all)

Learning is designed to stick – using every technique to reinforce and practice what is learned:

- 69% provide access to online or mobile job aids to provide the memory joggers, instruction sheets and checklists that can help embed skills and knowledge in behaviour (25%)
- 44% use spaced learning to aid retention and application of learning (13%)
Designing for success

If you already implement 70:20:10 – putting an effective apprenticeship model in place should be straightforward:

Manager involvement:
✓ Get senior buy-in and business engagement to change their mindset
✓ The line manager must be supported and a learning journey designed for them

Relevant and business-aligned content:
✓ Increase skills within the business to partner with your provider to tailor the programme to meet business needs
✓ Choose great business Subject Matter Experts
✓ Job mapping is a skill when job profiles and descriptions are weak
✓ Designing competency content is an art so upskill your staff

Keep the design simple:
✓ Don’t forget how much content you have to utilise (reuse and recycle)
✓ Do enough to meet the standard - we’ve been guilty of over-gilding the lily (ask yourself: ‘is it good enough?’)

Source: Interviews with Apprenticeship Managers
Perspective from senior business leaders

The new Institute of Apprenticeships is starting and the landscape is changing. We’re seeing a huge range of employer views on this. Companies are asking: ‘Can you help me take this problem away?’

Many we spoke to were feeling very negative about the changes.

View from L&D leaders/people professionals

► We aren’t going to recruit young apprentices - the company is seeing the new Levy as a tax. We will offer graduate apprenticeships as the higher level is seen as ‘safer’. There is a risk of bad press for the organisation if there is an unsatisfactory outcome from Ofsted.

► The new Levy will make it harder to manage budgets - any money will not be coming directly to the business employing the apprentice, but to the training provider (unless you decide to become an employer-provider).

Views from Apprenticeship Managers

► Companies are moving to Higher Apprenticeships. Level 2 is not mentioned often – only in the context of decreasing numbers of posts available.

Views from Apprenticeship policy and providers

► “We are working with the universities to define Level 6 Degree Apprenticeships for the digital industries. Standardisation of assessment is complex when Universities differ in their proposal. Our employers are crying out for Level 7 Masters Apprenticeships – delivered over 18 months to 2 years – which are appropriate for our largely Graduate entry workforce.”

► Many organisations have lowered intake or moved to Higher Apprenticeships in lower numbers.

► Some large organisations are pulling out of apprenticeships because of the perceived complexity of the new system.

► The UK government keep changing the rules or making late decisions so it is hard for us and organisations to plan effectively.

► We are concerned that the UK government’s focus is on quantity and not quality.

► Not one of the leaders we spoke to offer a flexible or part-time apprenticeship even though they have been asked for it.

► Traineeships need to be upgraded and linked to this new system as they often a feeder to apprenticeships.

Interviews with senior business leaders, March 2017
41% of learners say relevant and timely learning is essential
5 Integrating learning and work

Successful learners need resources that are motivational and relevant and rooted in practical action – and to work in an open, trusting environment.

93% of organisations taking part in the 2016 Benchmark want to integrate learning into the workflow. However, only 15% of them are managing to achieve their goal. In Unlocking Potential, we looked at a number of actions that they can take to help achieve the shift in culture that they seek.

Apprentices are learning all the time – as part of their everyday job – and many are prepared to work well beyond their working day to keep up with their studies.

89% consider that learning is part of their everyday work, although this is not always recognised by their peers.

“‘Apprentice’ used on my email after my title can be seen as negative with the company and our suppliers or partners – I have been asked if I can do the job a number of times when I am working.”
Apprentice

5.1 Build authentic and relevant learning experiences

Ensure learning is relevant

Each apprenticeship standard clearly sets out the core knowledge and skills required in each job role, but still one in five (21%) report that online learning content is not relevant. L&D leaders appear to be aware of this problem, but many are slow to take action:

► 48% of L&D strongly agree that staff can access learning that is directly relevant to their job (rising to 87% in the Top Deck)
► 46% regularly check that their programmes support and enhance organisational goals (87%)
► 42% identify actions that individuals must take for business outcomes to be achieved (71%)

Apprentices are looking for real-world situations and experiences to bring authenticity to their learning activities.
Transcripts or slides can provide a memory jogger or job aid when needed.

Adaptive content and feedback will allow learners to revisit sections that they found difficult or confusing.

Videos, photos, case studies and simulations all help to keep content relevant and meaningful.

Leaderboards, levels, scores, storytelling and other elements of reward or gamification all help to encourage and keep the interest of the reluctant or time-starved learner.

22% of apprentices want learning media that is drawn from actual situations that they will encounter at work.

Figure 15: Essential factors for a successful online learning experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>All (%)</th>
<th>Apprentices (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allows me to download transcripts/notes/slides</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken up into easy to digest learning chunks</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows me to self-direct my route through the programme</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes tests and feedback to reinforce my learning</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The media are drawn from actual situations</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes game-based elements</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Embed real work activities

70% of apprentices feel that they can quickly put their learning into practice.

However, 34% are looking for recommendations on how to use what they learn in their work in order to help translate formal learning into practical action.
Across the 2016 Benchmark:

- **26%** develop challenging and stretch tasks to embed learning in behaviour (74%)
- **45%** include activities to help people practice desired outcomes (94%)
- **38%** actively encourage staff to take on new work experiences as an opportunity to learn (74%)

This is particularly important for the learner in a small business where they are not able to gain the breadth of experience to fulfil an apprenticeship standard.

- **88%** of apprentices new to role seek out opportunities to gain new skills in the workplace

Using high-performing colleagues as mentors, examples of good practice – and as stimulus for creating quality learning resources – as well as putting a familiar face on screen in video or other interactive content. In the 2016 Benchmark:

- **24%** explore the behaviours of high-performing individuals when designing learning (50% in the Top Deck)

### 5.3 Build confident and successful learners

Establishing that link between learning and job success will help to convince reluctant learners – and their managers. L&D can take direct action to help by looking at their evaluation processes and the ways in which they demonstrate the value of learning across the organisation.

It is up to the influencers in the organisation, the senior and line managers, the mentors and the teams working alongside the apprentice to build the culture in the organisation in which the apprentice can become a confident and respected member of the team, making a valued contribution to the business.

- **68%** agree that it is easy to contribute new ideas in the workplace
- **65%** feel confident to be able to cope with change in their role or organisation

“We’ve had success by running lots of events with schools, parents, students, internally but be prepared for this investment as you need staff to do this effectively.” **Apprenticeship Manager**
5.4 Evaluating and demonstrating success

Learning is all about outcomes – for the individual and for the business where they work. It is nearly thirty years since Peter Senge described the ‘learning organisation’ and the importance of working collectively to improve results.

“A learning organisation is a group of people working together collectively to enhance their capabilities to create results they really care about.”

Over half of organisations do not conduct any evaluation on the majority of L&D activities, or limit their evaluation to course satisfaction only. Just 7% evaluate the wider impact on the business and society. Better understanding of what leads to success is needed if we want to impact business results.

“I never get asked how this apprenticeship is going to impact the business – I often question this.” Apprenticeship Manager

Learning from the Top Deck

Those in the Top Deck support a learning culture and are successfully integrating learning and work:

► 46% have successfully integrated learning into the workflow (15% all)
► 33% of managers make time for social and informal learning (10%)

They are also building authentic, social and practical learning in order to increase engagement and ensure that learning is increasingly considered part of everyday activity:

► 100% use highly interactive methods such as games and simulations (22%)
► 49% actively encourage learners to collaborate in building knowledge resources, using tools such as wikis, forums, podcasts and videos (13%)

They evaluate their programmes and communicate the benefits and successes to stakeholders:

► 87% regularly review their programmes and check that they enhance and support organisational goals (46%)
► 56% measure specific business metrics to evaluate programme effectiveness (17%)

In the final section, we draw together the lessons learned from apprentices and the Top Deck to provide a checklist of ‘quick wins’ for designing effective work-based learning.
Solving the practicalities of integration

“It is more difficult to integrate our apprentices when their training comes from different budgets.”

“The actuality (of the new standards) doesn’t look much like what we first designed.”

“We can use EPA grading to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.”

“Small, fast-growth companies can work together on developing innovative programmes (e.g. Tech City Stars) – or a larger company working with others in its supply chain can provide a greater breadth of experience for the Apprentice.”

“Apprenticeships can positively change the culture of the business/organisation.”

“Business needs to be strategic not transactional when deciding what to offer.”

“Providers have a lot of experience and experts which organisations often do not take the opportunity to utilise.”

“It should not be just about spending the levy or ticking boxes as they will fail – great providers will not do this they will challenge outdated approaches.”

“Providers needs to be in trusted partnerships with employers for great apprenticeships to succeed.”

“Programmes are being aligned to making Britain prosper, social mobility targets, talent pipelines, early career planning, ethical policy, intelligent capital and the right thing to do…[but] ROI is not being considered.”

“Sustainable talent tracking not considered – I will look at this.”

“We have seen significant improvements in the diversity of our workforce.”

“Apprentices are more motivated to progress than average employees, with lower sickness (often half the level of the rest of the organisation) rates and higher retention rates.”

“We’ve had a number of challenges with changing programmes as the needs of the business change.”

Oh dear…

“We have not reported on our programme at a senior level, even though it has been around for 5 years and is growing each year!”

“The off-the-job training requirement cannot be delivered solely by distance learning or out of normal working hours.”

“Enrolment, induction, initial diagnostic assessment, line manager support and mentoring are not included as part of the fundable elements.”

“L&D are not always equipped or aware of what to do.”

“L&D need to be SMART and make sure that they don’t get in the way!”

Source: Interviews with Apprenticeship Managers and Policy-makers
6 Conclusions / next steps

Apprenticeships can provide a work-based learning experience that delivers business results. They offer a real opportunity to drive change for organisations that are prepared to invest time and energy in their implementation.

Post-levy, there will be a different world around re-skilling existing employees and L&D need to adapt their approach for both re-skilling as well as new entrants into the workforce.

The changing landscape for apprenticeships provokes transformational discussion around the who, the why and the how. Employers can increase the diversity of their workforce, create a talent pipeline and deal with gaps e.g. across the STEM or disability agendas.

Apprentices want to learn. They want to share, to collaborate and get exposure to senior people both across the business and beyond. They are hungry for new challenges and to kick-start their career.

In so many respects they are no different from any other member of staff and the elements of effective workplace learning and development which we have explored in this report apply to all.

“There is a range of quality provision out there. Currently our only benchmark is OFSTED, but best practice is the true partnership between employers and providers. Why would you do something different for one part of your business and not the others?”

David Willett, The Open University
10 tips for increasing programme impact

These tips are derived from what we have gleaned about successful apprenticeship programmes – but equally apply to work-based learning in general:

**Balance the needs of the business and the individual:**

1. Embed work-based learning in workforce planning in order to leverage the new opportunities presented by the changing apprenticeship landscape
2. Align work-based programmes to business goals – and to fulfil the personal aspirations of the learner

**Help today’s self-directed learners to help themselves:**

3. Involve learners in programme design, and empower them to set the pace and direction of travel
4. Offer learners relevant choices and build on the factors that motivate them
5. Empower learners to manage their own learning and ensure that they can find what they need
6. Support performance at the point of need with on- and offline resources, with access to mentors and line coaches

**Integrate learning and work to improve the learner journey:**

7. Maximise opportunities for social and collaborative learning and help learners to build the active networks that can support the learner journey
8. Root formal training in action, with opportunities to practice new skills and embed them in behaviour
9. Draw examples from authentic, real-world situations to add meaning and relevance

**Build a learning culture in which learning is an organisation-wide responsibility:**

10. Engage all the stakeholders – especially the line managers – to make learning for all just ‘a part of the everyday job’
A checklist for starting successful work-based learning

☐ Do your L&D team have the skills to facilitate social learning?
☐ Are classroom trainers using existing social media channels to support learners beyond the classroom?
☐ Are you familiar with all the standards applicable to your industry?
☐ How will the new standards help you define a competence framework for existing staff?
☐ Have you considered how to ensure that the attitudes, values and behaviours described in the standards used in your organisation are reinforced through your learning and development strategy?
☐ How can you ensure that the core knowledge covered in the off-the-job curriculum is reinforced in the workplace?
☐ How will you raise awareness and acceptance of apprentices in your organisation?
☐ What are the priority business talent targets/skills gaps that you need to address?
☐ What name are you going to use to badge ‘Apprentices’ for older workers?
☐ Are you engaging with senior managers to secure their buy in?
☐ Which internal stakeholders do you need to work with?
☐ Which experienced external partners will you work with to support you?
☐ How will you upskill L&D, HR, recruitment and finance professionals with regard to workforce planning and competency-related learning and development?
☐ Are you developing the skills of experienced staff to be line managers, coaches or mentors for those new to role?
☐ How will you gather – and act on – learner feedback on the learning offered?
☐ Do you understand the performance support needs of your learners?
☐ Will you allow learners to self-direct their route through learning resources?
☐ How can you involve your work-based learners more in learning design?
☐ Can you identify the resources that best support each of the job roles in your organisation?
☐ Are the learning resources on your platforms supported by Single Sign On, search facilities and guidance as to how best to use them?

Source: Interviews with HR managers, March 2017
How have apprenticeships in England changed?
https://www.gov.uk/education/Apprenticeships-traineeships-and-internships

### Before 6 April 2017
- Apprenticeship frameworks
- Defined by sector body such as Sector Skills Council
- Regulated by SASE
- Accredited competence and knowledge qualification(s)

### After 6 April 2017
- Apprenticeship standards
- Overview of occupation and job titles
- Employers have defined the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for occupational competence
- Assessment plan (qualifications no longer mandatory in every sector)

### The Apprenticeship Levy
The levy requires all employers operating in the UK, with a pay bill over £3 million each year, to invest in apprenticeships. From April 2017, the levy is collected through PAYE and applies across the UK.

### If you want to employ an apprentice:

#### Employers paying the Levy only:
Register with the Skills Funding Agency to access your Apprenticeship Service Account – the amount available for you to spend on Apprentices in England.

**All employers:**
1. Select the Apprenticeship Standard to suit the occupation/job role for your staff member
2. Select your government-approved training provider
3. Select your government approved assessment organisation
4. Agree the price with the training provider

#### Employers paying the Levy:
You can use the funds in your account up to the funding band maximum – if the training costs any more, you will need to pay the provider. Once your account is used up you will pay 10% of the cost, with 90% paid by government.

**All employers**
Advertise for your apprentice, interview and appoint them as you would any other member of staff for at least a 12 month job. Note that existing employees can also be put onto an apprenticeship programme.

#### If you want to become an apprenticeship training provider
You will need to apply to be on the government Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.
1. Register with the UK Register of Learning Providers and the Information Commissioners Office
2. Register for an account with the Skills Funding Agency and enter a contract with them
3. Develop and deliver quality training to your staff to meet the selected standard
4. Submit returns to the SFA to draw down funding (15 funding bands relate to job role and level).

*Note: There will be 4 deadlines for applications each year and you need to reapply every 12 months. You will be liable to inspection by Ofsted.*
Organisations contributing to this research

The following organisations participated in focus groups and interviews, choosing to release their name for publication:

Allen and Overy
App4Eng
Arbuthnot Latham and Co Ltd
Asos
AXA Insurance
Barclays
BCS
BDA
Belron
Benefits2Apps
Brambles
British Gas
BT
Capita
Citi
CompTia
Credit Suisse
Deloitte
Direct Line GROUP
E.ON Energy
East of England Co-op
Ernst and Young
Etihad
ForSkills
Halifax
House of Fraser
International plc
John Lewis
JPMorgan
KPMG
learndirect
LEO
Lloyds Banking Group
Love Apps
LV
Markel International
Marks and Spencer plc
McDonald's
Microsoft
Middleton Murray
MOD
Myerscough College
Nandos
NAS
Nationwide BS
New Look
Next plc
NFU Mutual
Npower
One File
QA
Raytheon
RBS
Restaurants Ltd
River Island
Royal Corps of Signals
Sabmiller
Sainsbury's
SFA
Sony
Standard Life
Telefonica
Tesco PLC
The Body Shop
The Open University
The Tech Partnership
Thomas Cook
Three
TRG
Unilever
Visa
Vocalink
Volvo
Whittard
Youthforce
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For more than 45 years, The Open University (OU) has led the way in innovative, part-time education, developing workplace learning and development solutions for employers (across the private, public and voluntary sectors), as well as educating individuals.

The OU delivers workplace learning and development, research and consultancy, and work-based learning solutions to a range of businesses. Specialising in developing high quality learning materials, based on rigorous research and industry insight, the OU combines academic excellence with technological expertise to deliver flexible, results-driven and truly engaging workplace learning solutions.

The OU’s flexible and adaptable approach enables consistent learning to be delivered at scale, across geographically dispersed workforces, through having an online delivery model that uses advanced learning analytics to enhance the performance of busy professionals.

This – coupled with a successful, well-developed blended learning approach – is how the OU has enabled employers to deliver learning that is responsive to both organisational and staff needs, therefore maximising their return on learning investment.

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The OU offers:

- Degree and higher apprenticeships
- Degrees, diplomas and short courses (including the triple-accredited MBA)
- Tailored learning solutions

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About Towards Maturity

Towards Maturity is an independent benchmarking practice that provides authoritative research and expert advisory services to help assess and improve the effectiveness and consistency of L&D performance within organisations. The Towards Maturity portfolio includes:

The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study™
www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmark
The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study is an internationally recognised longitudinal study on the effective implementation of learning innovation based on the input of 5,000 organisations and 35,000 learners over 12 years. Towards Maturity continuously surveys and studies how people learn at work. This data is used to help L&D leaders assess and improve the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of their learning provision. Review your learning strategy using our online Benchmark Centre and receive your Personalised Benchmark Report.

Towards Maturity Strategic Review™
www.towardsmaturity.org/strategicreview
The Towards Maturity Strategic Review is a deeper analysis and comparison of your Benchmark against those who are already utilising learning innovation to deliver bottom line results and success. It helps you analyse and interpret your Personalised Benchmark Report to establish a baseline and identify the next action steps for performance improvement within your organisation.

Towards Maturity Learning Landscape™
www.towardsmaturity.org/learner
The Towards Maturity Learning Landscape provides critical insights to help you understand the behaviours of your staff so you can design learning solutions that can be embedded more effectively into the workflow. It supports new learning technology strategies whilst mitigating risk when introducing new programmes or models of learning.

Towards Maturity Sector Benchmark Groups
www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmarkgroups
Join senior L&D leaders in your sector three times a year to use the TM Benchmark to support performance improvement, prioritise action planning and accelerate progress. Membership supports faster business results, strategic and tactical insights and gives an invaluable opportunity to network.

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