

# Degree Apprenticeships:

## Identifying new opportunities for developing future programmes

According to HEFCE, Phase 1 of the Degree Apprenticeships Development Fund (DADF) saw a total of £4.5 million awarded to 25 universities and 20 colleges to support nearly 5,200 new programmes. Although this represents just a fraction of degrees throughout the country, with increasing numbers of young people looking for alternative methods of gaining a degree but without incurring the cost, the likelihood is that degree apprenticeships will become more popular.



With this increased interest comes the incentive for more institutions to develop a degree apprenticeship programme, or for those who already have one to add to their existing programme. However, for any institution that is looking to go down this route, there is a fundamental question that must be answered: which areas shall we look to develop degree apprenticeships in?

### Why understanding the regional economic context is key

Unlike traditional degrees, which do not necessarily need to be directly aligned to the labour market (although that is to be desired), degree apprenticeships must align with the labour market for the simple reason that there are employers involved. What this means is that the key to answering the question of which new programmes to introduce, lies in an institution better understanding the economic and labour market context of its region.

The quickest and most effective method of achieving this better understanding is through the use of Labour Market Insight (LMI). By using granular LMI, an institution can identify the following, all of which are essential to creating a structured approach to degree apprenticeships:

- **The skills needs of its target regional economy**
- **The industries and occupations which are set to grow in the region over the next few years**
- **Which employers are most likely to have a demand for degree-level apprentices**

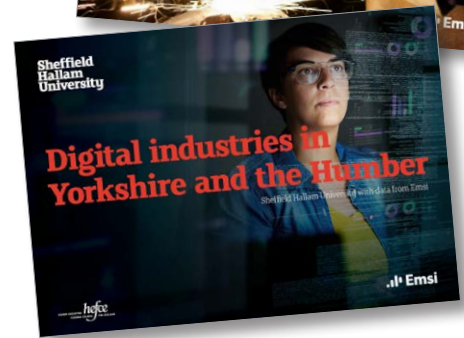
Emsi has been working with two universities – Sheffield Hallam and Birmingham City – to help them understand their regional economic context, enabling them to make more informed decisions around their degree apprenticeship programme. Over the next couple of pages, we'll take a look at how this has been done.

# Sheffield Hallam University

## Degree Apprenticeship Sector Reports

In terms of numbers, Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) is the third largest higher education institution in the country with around 35,000 students and over 4,400 staff. SHU identified the need to diversify in the light of a number of external factors such as a demographic decline in the 16-19 population, likely increased competition as a result of the Higher Education and Research Bill, and general movement towards a more employer-driven skills system. One of the ways they are doing this is through the development of a degree apprenticeship programme.

In order to establish where the potential for degree apprenticeships might exist in their region, SHU commissioned Emsi to produce a series of reports looking at job demand in four different sectors: construction; advanced manufacturing; digital; and management. Each of these reports began with a brief overview of the sector, comparing job numbers and growth with the rest of Britain, before delving deeper to look at:



- **Sector specialisms within Yorkshire and Humber**
- **Apprenticeship engagement by employers across the sector**
- **The skills that are currently driving the sector, together with projected demand to 2022**
- **The occupations with the highest percentage of employees with a degree or higher**
- **Current and future demand for these top occupations**

These short, data-rich reports revealed a number of things that are now helping to inform the university as to what new degree apprenticeships it should develop. For instance, although engineering roles in general are set to decline in the region, the data reveals that this is not the case with higher level skills, and there are likely to be around 935 job openings for mechanical engineers in the region by 2022. Another area highlighted by the data is the rapid growth of computer programming, with an expected 3,955 openings for programmers and software development professionals by 2022.

According to the university's Degree Apprenticeship Development Manager, Mark Rayner, these reports are proving enormously helpful in terms of understanding where they should look to prioritise their efforts around developing new programmes:

“ The data in these reports has revealed to us a number of opportunities for growing our degree apprenticeships over the next few years. We believed that there might be potential in each sector, but we now not only have hard evidence to support this belief, but can also see more clearly the occupational areas within each sector where opportunities lie. ”



# Birmingham City University

## Degree apprenticeship market analysis



Emsi has also been working with Birmingham City University (BCU) to help them better understand the potential for degree apprenticeships in their area. But whereas the approach taken by Sheffield Hallam was to start with sectors and investigate the opportunities that exist within them, BCU took more of a "blank page" approach, commissioning Emsi to look at the labour market in the West Midlands as a whole, and to identify potential opportunities for new degree apprenticeships.

The resulting report was a full degree apprenticeship market analysis of the West Midlands region, which contained the following:

- **An overview of industries in the region, identifying the key sectors driving growth**
- **A workforce analysis, looking at demographic, unemployment and qualification levels in the region**
- **An identification of the occupations with the greatest potential for degree apprenticeships**

Having identified certain occupations with degree apprenticeship potential, the report then took an in-depth look at four of these in turn. This included **a demand profile**, looking at the historic growth and projected trends for the occupation in comparison to the job market in the region as a whole; **a supply profile**, looking at the demographic and qualification make-up of the occupation in the region; **an industry profile**, identifying which sectors employ the role; and **a recruitment profile**, looking at where in the region the occupations are being employed, what actual job titles employers are looking for, and the hard and soft skills that are involved in the role.

In other words, the degree apprenticeship market analysis not only provided BCU with a window on their regional labour market, but also an evidence-based assessment of the main opportunities for developing degree apprenticeship programmes in the university region, and a comprehensive breakdown of some of the best prospects. As Resham Gill, the university's Partnerships and Collaboration (Higher Apprenticeships) Manager commented:

*This report has really helped us to identify a number of areas where we can look to develop our offer. Having solid numbers, rather than educated guesses, means that we can now build a robust case for developing degree apprenticeships in a number of areas, and it also gives us the confidence that what we are proposing is very much needed in our region.*



**To find out how we can help your institution identify possible areas for degree apprenticeship development, contact Andy Durman at:**

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