Graduate Apprenticeships: principles, practice and impact

Dr James Paterson
Glasgow Caledonian University
The research team

Brian Smith
Christopher Smith
Andrew Cowell
Constantinos Choromides
James Paterson
Shariq Sheikh
Tayo Owoeye
Introduction

GCU is the largest provider of Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs) in Scotland
Five years experience of GA delivery
Currently offering eight GA programmes in IT, Engineering, Built Environment and Business
This study aims to capture the learnings from this experience
Context

GA programmes deliver work-based learning and contribute to widening participation.

Multidimensional context reflects:
- Range and variety of disciplines offered within GCU
- Diversity of stakeholders

Emergent areas of interest will inform the body of knowledge and review of institutional delivery principles.
Methodology

Literature review - academic and internal documentation
Defined stakeholder groups:
• Apprentices (existing students and alumni)
• Employers
• Academic staff
• University professional services staff
• University leadership
Initially surveyed stakeholders
Survey findings identified emergent areas to explore further through focus groups and interviews
WBL and WIL

Work-Based Learning
• Curriculum and partnership [1]

Work-Integrated Learning
• Pedagogy, combines academic information with knowledge through workplace experiences [2]

Principles [3,4,5]
• Clear purpose
• Context
• Authentic activity
• Partnership
• Status
• Specificity
• Expectations
• Need
• Compliance
Findings

Early stage of analysis
Strongly emerging broad concepts from stakeholder groups

Divergent areas
• Stakeholder groups differ in perceptions
• Potential tension between partners
• Need to work together to harmonise expectations

Convergent areas
• Significant agreement between perceptions of stakeholder groups
• Clear implications and action points
Divergent areas

Delivery model
• Primarily employers/university
• Length of programme
• Structure of academic year
• Teaching – front loaded, day-release, etc.

Perceptions of WBL/WIL
• Primarily apprentices/academics
• Applied content vs broad encompassing education
• Assessment
Convergent areas

Resource implications
• GAs need more academic resource than “traditional” students
• Need resource within the workplace
• Partnership required to implement WIL pedagogy

Framework flexibility
• GA programmes currently have to comply with specific frameworks
• Need to enable providers to develop programmes more easily to meet employer demands
Completing the project

Complete the analysis of our data
Granular exploration of concepts and perceptions through thematic analysis
Review existing GCU provision and principles in the light of our findings to inform future institutional strategy
Further dissemination of findings
References

Thank you