

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
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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

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Thank you

