

# Apprenticeships Operations Strategy

2024-2028

Emma Ward, Head of Apprenticeships

# Mission

We will expand our apprenticeship provision in breadth, depth and rigour, so that it is regarded by employers as their first choice for workforce development and by apprentices as providing an outstanding learner experience.



# We will achieve this by:



1. **Delivering exceptional learner experience by operating our apprenticeships to a rigorously high standard.**
2. **Increase numbers on our existing programmes and expand our portfolio of Apprenticeship Standards.**
3. **Ensuring sustainability of our apprenticeship programmes by monitoring their viability and profitability.**
4. **Forging productive links with employers to ensure the success of our apprenticeship provision.**
5. **Utilising our apprenticeship levy to develop and train our own workforce.**
6. **Introducing a 'Hub and Spoke Model' to optimise our operation of apprenticeships.**

# 1. Delivering exceptional learner experience by operating our apprenticeships to a rigorously high standard

## ACTIONS:

We will ensure robust self-assessment of all apprenticeships to drive quality standards.

- Provide Faculty with clear guidelines and expectations for Self-assessment Reports (SARs) and Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) and monitor these quarterly.
- Conduct training and provide resources to help Faculty understand the self-assessment process, identify areas for improvement and develop meaningful QIPs.
- Ensure that Faculty SARs and QIPs are aligned with institutional goals, priorities, and standards of excellence.
- Maintain open communication channels with Faculty throughout the self-assessment and QIP process, including regular reminders, updates, and opportunities for feedback to ensure Faculty feel supported and engaged.

We will ensure effective governance of apprenticeships.

- Drive the University Partnerships Committee (UPC) to ensure our apprenticeship programmes are managed effectively and are aligned with the needs of both employers and apprentices to meet regulatory requirements.
- Ensure transparency and accuracy of data presented to the UPC to enable sound decisions.

We will implement a Quality Calendar of Internal Quality Assurance.

- Ensure the full learner journey is mapped and covered with planned activities involving all wider services within the University.
- Academic assessment standardisation and lesson observation is planned and executed to a high standard.
- Support Faculty to stay updated on industry best practices and regulatory changes.
- Develop/update Apprenticeship policies and procedures to support quality assurance.
- Schedule regular communication and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in delivery to maintain quality standards.

# 1. Delivering exceptional learner experience by operating our apprenticeships to a rigorously high standard

## CRITICAL DEPENDENCIES:

- Adequate resourcing in Faculty to support Apprenticeship delivery
- Continued professional development budget for staff to support the central and faculty team
- Adoption of the hub and spoke model

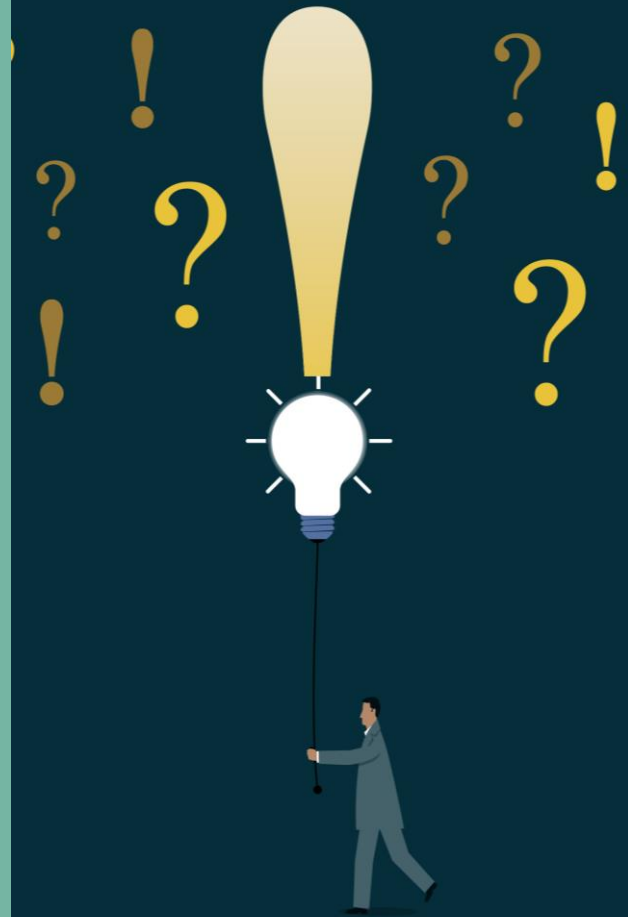
## KPIs:

- Faculty have SARs and QIPs in place and these are moderated annually by 1st October
- Attend / lead regulatory visits to support university status to remain on the APAR register with a minimum of Good rating
- QIP update meetings conducted quarterly to encourage completion of actions by 31st July annually
- Mock DfE inspection is conducted bi-annually
- Mock OfS inspection is conducted annually
- Mock OFSTED inspections (EIF and ITT) are conducted every three years, targeting Outstanding criteria

## RELEVANCE MAPPING: Academic Excellence, Student Partnership

"We will grow our academic provision in both breadth, depth and rigour"

"We will grow our people by supporting them with professional development and state-of-the-art systems and processes."



## 2. Increase numbers on our existing programmes and expand our portfolio of Apprenticeship Standards

### ACTIONS:

We will expand learner numbers on existing (as at 2024) apprenticeship programmes.

- Set agreed recruitment targets for our business development activity that delivers growth of existing programmes.
- Prioritise partnerships with organisations that provide us with repeat business (a regular pipeline of new apprentices).

We will work with Faculties to support the introduction of additional Apprenticeship Standards.

- Conduct market research and monitor new Standards in development.
- Talk to existing employers at annual reviews and employer forums to discuss future training needs.
- Use local skills plans (e.g. [Buckinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan](#), [Buckinghamshire Skills and Employment Strategy](#)) and data to inform prospective future programmes.
- Conduct bi-annual meetings with Faculty to discuss available standards for delivery
- Support Faculties to complete a business case for new apprenticeship standards.
- Encourage the provision of contextualised programmes, where appropriate, to make our programmes attractive to target sectors.

We will seek opportunities to gain exposure and industry recognition, boosting the appeal of our apprenticeship programmes.

- Seek awards, accreditation and key partnerships.
- Promote our provision at conferences such as BSME, GSA, COBIS, Wellington festival, IAPS, HMC, FOBISIA.
- Secure public sector contracts to be the preferred provider for maintained schools, councils, police and NHS, e.g. on the YPO procurement site.

## 2. Increase numbers on our existing programmes and expand our portfolio of Apprenticeship Standards

### CRITICAL DEPENDENCIES:

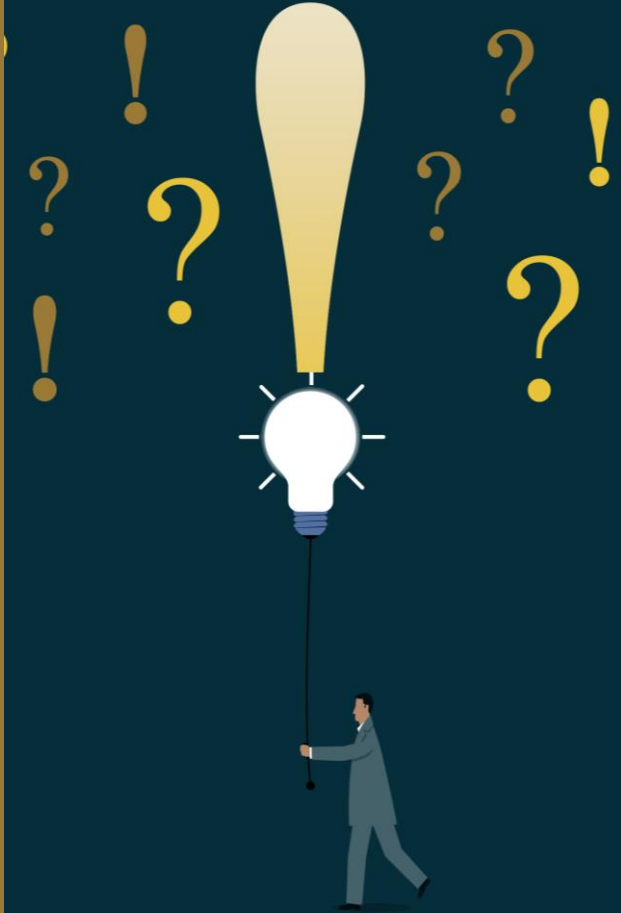
- Capacity of Marketing team to develop with marketing plans, promotional materials and campaigns to support our B2B sales activity
- Capacity of Finance team to support with business case creation
- Faculty resourcing to support apprenticeship introduction and growth
- Portfolio Development Group activity to ensure the financial and resourcing viability

### KPIs:

- L7 Senior Leader: increase volume of new starts per year by 100% 24-25 then 50% each year after
- L7 Digital and Technology Solutions Specialist: increase volume of new starts per year by 25%
- L6 Teacher: increase volume of new starts per year by 10%
- Increase numbers across 3 apprenticeships by 50% by 2028
- Launch at least 1 new apprenticeship programme each year (either new standard or new contextualised version of an existing standard)
- Source and complete a minimum of 1 robust bid for preferred supplier status per year

### RELEVANCE MAPPING: Academic Excellence, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Guiding principles: "We will grow our student numbers, income and surplus in a planned, measured and sustainable manner." "We will grow our academic provision in both breadth, depth and rigour"



### 3. Ensure sustainability of our apprenticeship programmes by monitoring their viability and profitability.

#### ACTIONS:

We will expand learner numbers and our Apprenticeship portfolio to a level that is both profitable and manageable.

- Set growth targets that take account of the capacity of each Faculty to deliver more Apprenticeship Standards to larger numbers of learners.
- Prioritise partnerships with organisations that provide us with repeat business (a regular pipeline of new apprentices).

We will introduce measures to monitor and enhance profitability of existing apprenticeship programmes.

- Conduct annual monitoring of the cost-effectiveness of each apprenticeship programme by calculating the total investment per apprentice, including recruitment, training, and support costs, compared to the income they generate.
- Pursue funding opportunities, such as government grants, employer contributions and funding bands.
- Benchmark the performance and outcomes of our apprenticeship programmes against competitors.

### 3. Ensure sustainability of our apprenticeship programmes by monitoring their viability and profitability.

#### CRITICAL DEPENDENCIES:

- Capacity of Marketing team to develop marketing plans, promotional materials and campaigns to support our B2B sales activity
- Budget for marketing and B2B sales activity
- Capacity of Finance team to support with annual reviews of programme cost-effectiveness
- An ongoing cooperative relationship with Faculties delivering apprenticeships

#### KPIs:

- Growth targets for the following year agreed annually with Faculty.
- Reviews of cost-effectiveness are completed annually to ensure the financial validity of each apprenticeship programme

#### RELEVANCE MAPPING: Academic Excellence, Innovation and entrepreneurship

Guiding principles: "We will grow our student numbers, income and surplus in a planned, measured and sustainable manner."



## 4. Forging productive links with employers to ensure the success of our apprenticeship provision

### ACTIONS:

We will take a strategic approach to employer engagement.

- Allocate dedicated resourcing to B2B sales (Business Development Manager in post 2024).
- Develop sales targets to deliver on the growth set out in this strategy (50% growth in numbers overall)
- Introduce key account management to ensure that key employer partners have a single point of contact
- Track the percentage of initial employer contacts that result in signed apprenticeship agreements, including public webinar attendance.
- Analyse and report on employer satisfaction surveys on a quarterly basis with employers who have engaged with our apprenticeship programs to provide valuable feedback on employer satisfaction levels.
- Measure the number of new employer partnerships that result from referrals from existing partner organisations.
- Submit bids and tenders to win apprenticeship business that fits with our growth plans.

We will collaborate with other teams for activity that supports employer engagement.

- Work with Faculties and Marketing teams to create content, including case studies, for targeted marketing campaigns and promotional material and ensuring that website content remains current.
- Host public webinars in conjunction with Faculties to promote each Apprenticeship standard.
- Work with Careers and Employability Service to share employer contacts.
- Attend relevant networking events and invite Faculty when necessary to promote provision

## 4. Forging productive links with employers to ensure the success of our apprenticeship provision

### CRITICAL DEPENDENCIES:

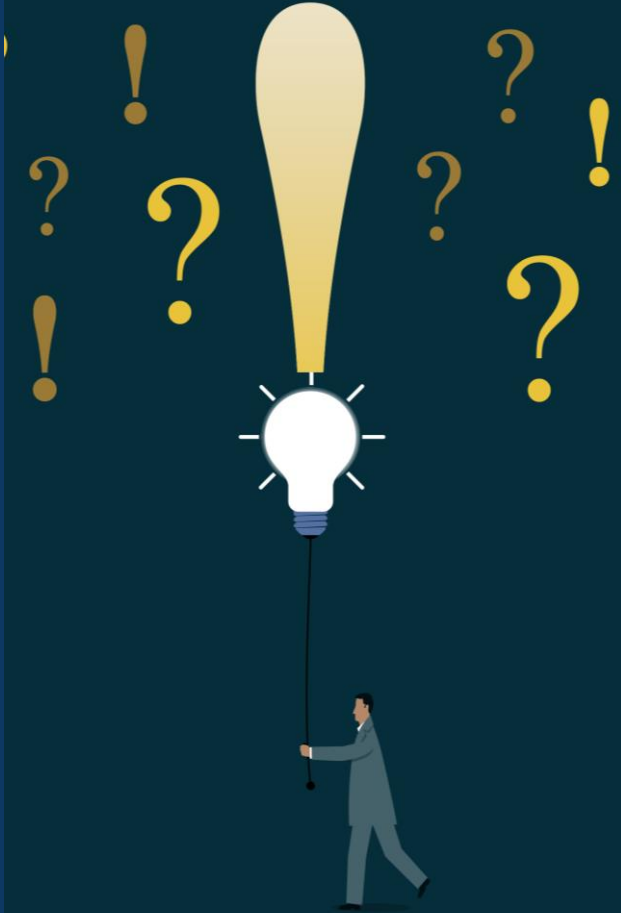
- Capacity of Marketing team to support the development of marketing plans, promotional materials and campaigns to support our B2B sales activity
- Budget to engage in employer promotional activities

### KPIs:

- Key account management processes and principles to be embedded by end of 2024.
- Conversion Rate of Employer Leads to be monitored on a termly basis, growing to 50%+ by 2028.
- New apprenticeship agreements secured (with new and existing employers) to be monitored monthly. Targets still TBC and must meet planned growth targets per apprenticeship standard.
- Skills England employer satisfaction star rating at 3 or above.
- New employer partnerships that result from referrals from existing partner organisations monitored monthly basis. Targets still TBC but working towards high referral rates (67%+) by 2028.

### RELEVANCE MAPPING: Academic Excellence, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Guiding principles: "We will grow our student numbers, income and surplus in a planned, measured and sustainable manner."



## 5. Utilising our apprenticeship levy to develop and train our own workforce

### ACTIONS:

We will improve internal staff knowledge of apprenticeship opportunities.

- Create a SharePoint area for Apprenticeships.
- Promote apprenticeship programmes internally to encourage existing staff to apply, e.g. celebrate the achievements of employee apprentices as they complete their programmes or reach significant milestones.

We will ensure our Apprenticeship Levy is utilised.

- Allocate funds from the apprenticeship levy to cover the costs of training and assessment for both existing staff and new apprentices.
- Work closely with the Training and Development Manager to highlight opportunities for apprenticeship standards to meet university staff skill shortages. Offer (outsourcing to other providers if necessary) new apprenticeship programmes as required.

## 5. Utilising our apprenticeship levy to develop and train our own workforce

### CRITICAL DEPENDENCIES:

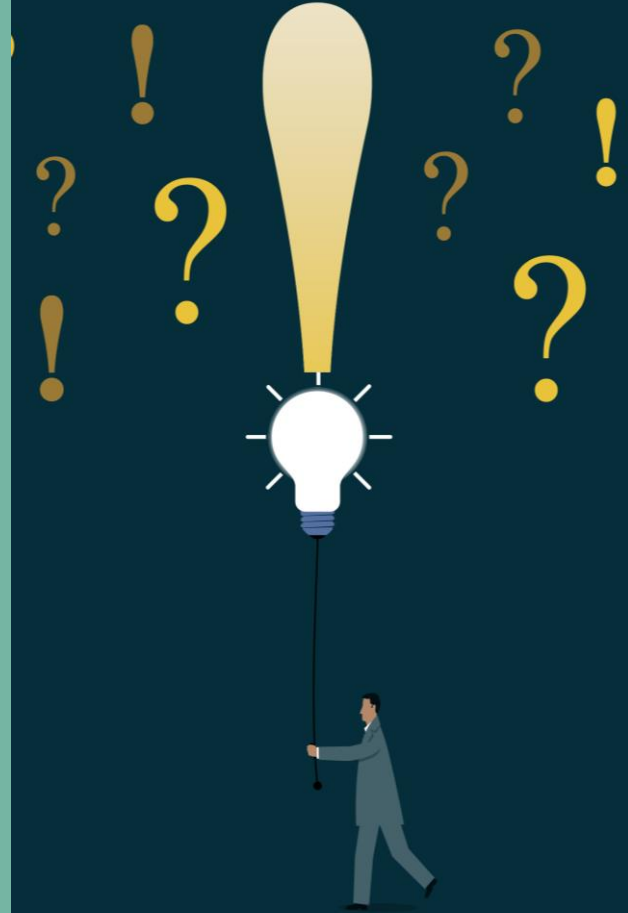
- University commitment to staff development through Apprenticeships
- Faculty resource to enable off the job required release
- Government plans for the Apprenticeship Levy

### KPIs:

- 100% of employee apprentices are retained and achieve.
- By 2028 we will be consistently utilising at least 80% of our apprenticeship levy
- Evidence, through the staff survey, of positive impact of the levy spend.

### RELEVANCE MAPPING: Academic Excellence

We will grow our people by supporting them with professional development and state-of-the-art systems and processes.



## 6. Introducing a 'Hub and Spoke Model' to optimise our operation of apprenticeships.

### ACTIONS:

- We will build an agile hub and spoke apprenticeship team which is able to effectively and efficiently support apprenticeship delivery within the university
- we will periodically review structures to ensure they are fit for purpose and can support new areas of work
- Clearly articulate the goals of the Hub and Spoke model, focusing on how it will enhance apprenticeship offerings, improve operational efficiency, and expand opportunities.
- Clearly delineate the roles of the hub (Central Team) and spokes (Faculty/Departments) to ensure smooth collaboration and accountability
- Develop policies and procedures for managing relationships, resource allocation, and program delivery within the model.
- Develop a communication plan to keep partners informed and engaged, including regular updates, meetings, and feedback loops.
- Offer training and professional development for university staff involved in delivering the apprenticeship programs.
- Use feedback and data to continuously refine and enhance the Hub and Spoke model, ensuring it remains responsive to changing needs and opportunities.
- Develop and implement risk management strategies to mitigate potential challenges or disruptions in the apprenticeship programs.

## 6. Introducing a 'Hub and Spoke Model' to optimise our operation of apprenticeships.

### CRITICAL DEPENDENCIES:

- Adoption of the hub and spoke model
- Stakeholder engagement e.g. Deans, academic staff, Academic Services etc. in the governance structure of apprenticeship delivery
- Institution-wide support via adequate funding and resourcing to support Apprenticeship delivery
- Fit for purpose data management systems

### KPIs:

- Feed into UALTC, UPC through regular attendance at Committee meetings
- 1 Termly Report to be submitted to Executive Team on a termly basis.
- Annual Policy updates to ensure compliance with regulatory bodies
- Mock OFSTED inspections (EIF and ITT) are conducted every three years, targeting Outstanding
- Implement and monitor clear roles and responsibilities for both the hub and spoke to ascertain accountability for all aspects of the Apprenticeship delivery
- Implement at least three significant process or program improvements annually, informed by stakeholder feedback.

**RELEVANCE MAPPING:** Academic Excellence, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Guiding principles: "We will grow our student numbers, income and surplus in a planned, measured and sustainable manner." "We will grow our academic provision in both breadth, depth and rigour"



# Strategic map

Strategic Map / Gantt chart positioning the objectives over the five years – to follow

	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	2026	2027	2028
Objective 1			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Objective 2				Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Objective 3	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Objective 4	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple
Objective 5			Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green