
Higher and degree apprenticeships survey results

About the survey

The survey was intended to support preparation of a Jisc guide to the use of technology in delivering higher and degree apprenticeships. It was launched in October 2017 and closed in January 2018.

The survey was not intended to be a rigorous quantitative evaluation. Participants were invited to give their own views on certain issues and to speculate about future plans. The number of responses from across the higher education sector does however give a fairly rich picture of the state of play there.

We received 49 responses from 37 different organisations.

The breakdown of respondents by background was:

- 42 higher education providers
- 5 HE in FE providers
- 2 other (government department & independent training provider)

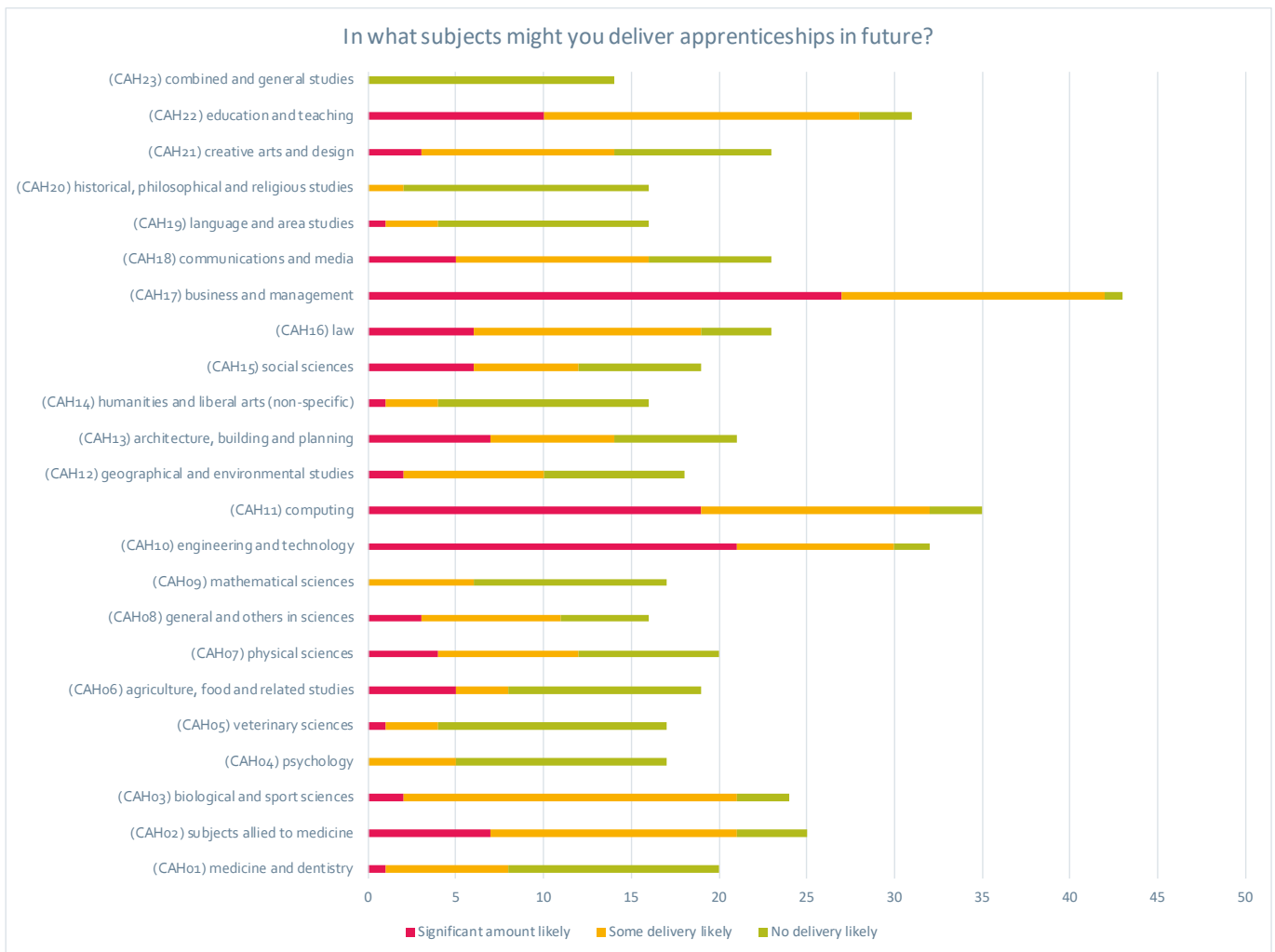
Most of the respondents were in senior management positions relating to academic development or having specific responsibility for apprenticeships/vocational education. Other job roles represented included senior teaching staff and learning technologists.

About the apprenticeships

Around 86% of respondents told us they were already delivering apprenticeships and 86% of this number were delivering at degree level whilst half had some form of other higher level provision.

It is clear that most see degree level apprenticeships as the biggest growth area. Some 93% of those delivering degree apprenticeships expected to see their provision grow whereas those delivering other higher level apprenticeships were almost evenly split between those who expected some growth and those who expected things to stay around the same. Very few respondents expected to deliver fewer apprenticeships in the future and the reasons for such a response were not followed up.

We asked in which subjects respondents might expect to deliver higher and degree level apprenticeships in the future and the responses are shown below:



The subjects are grouped according to the common aggregation hierarchy (CAH) developed to provide standard groupings for different reporting purposes.

The results seem to align with expectations and what is generally reported ie that business and management subjects are the most popular followed by STEM subjects. The only real surprise is that the predicted growth in subjects allied to medicine is not greater as we might have expected to see a shift towards apprenticeships as a preferred model in nursing.

About the employers

We asked about what kind of employers providers expected to be working with in relation to higher and degree apprenticeships:

Multinational	53%
UK wide	83%
Large regional employers	89%
SMEs	68%

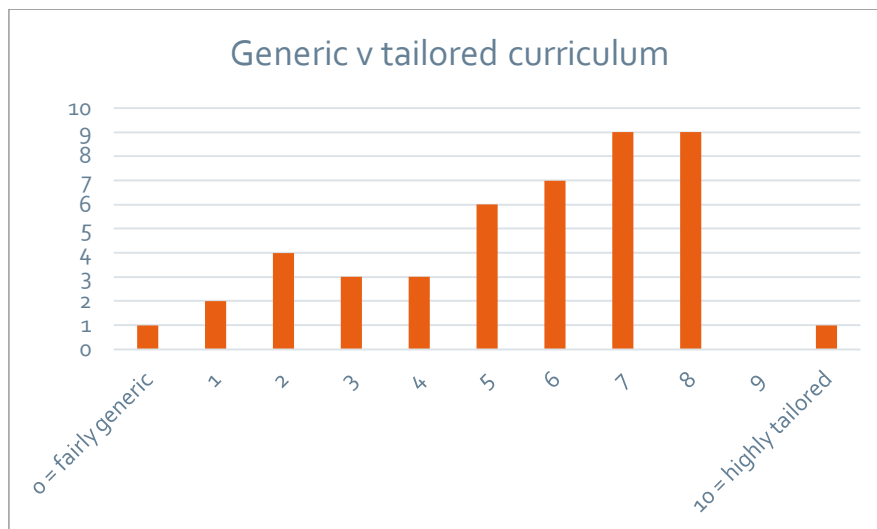
There were quite a few comments around meeting the needs of different types of employer. Those working with multinationals noted the demand for globally recognised certification and those working with UK wide employers noted issues around the different funding rules in England and Scotland.

There was some comments that the smaller number of apprentices in each organisation and the wide variation between employers made SMEs more difficult to work with. One respondent noted *'SMES need a lot of guidance and often while they say they want graduate apprenticeships - they often need smaller chunks of training.'*

About the programmes

Curriculum

We asked about the extent to which apprenticeship programmes are tailored to individual employer needs.



We invited respondents to indicate on a scale of 0-10 the extent to which their apprenticeship programmes are generic for a particular standard or tailored to particular employer needs. Whilst some respondents said they

only tailor programmes for significant cohorts from the same employer, the tendency seems to be to offer relatively bespoke solutions.

Start dates

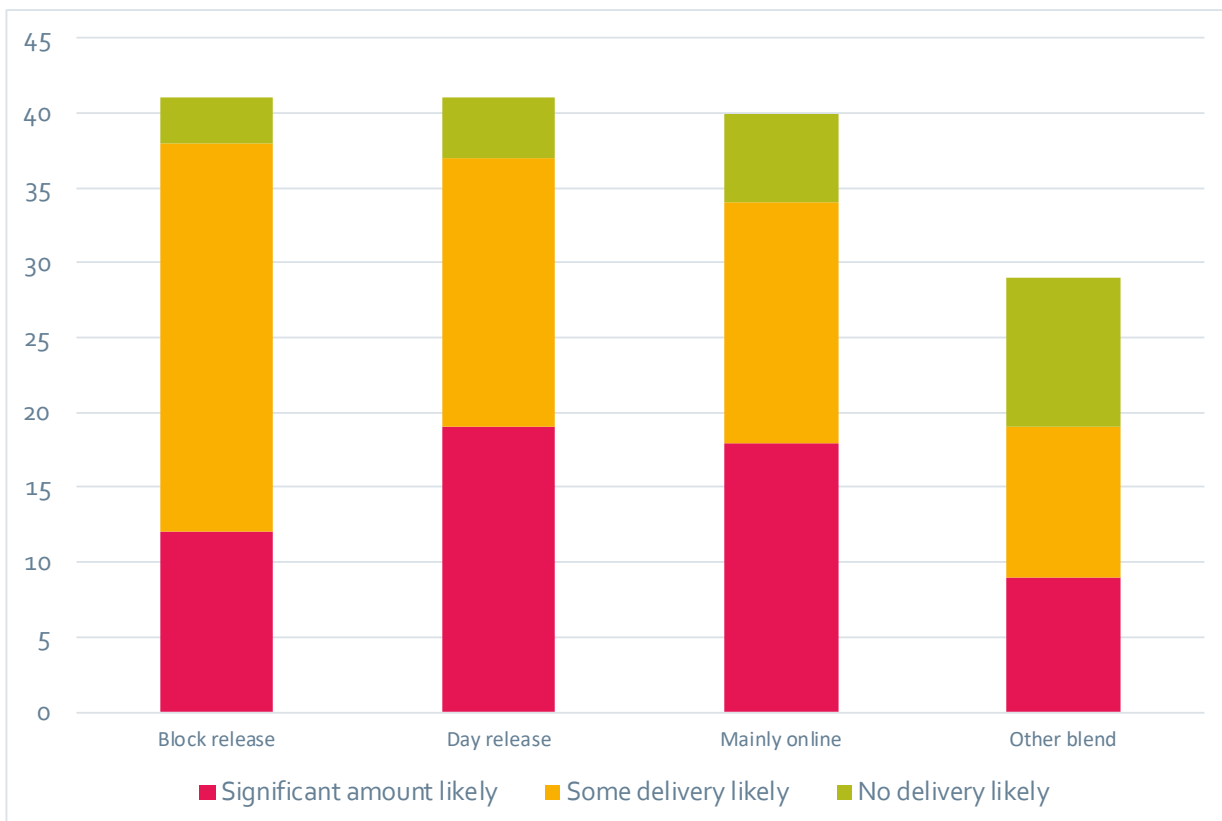
There was a spread of responses concerning the extent to which providers are able to offer flexibility to employers in terms of when apprentices start their programmes.

Fixed annual cycle	36%
Multiple cohorts per year	67%
Flexible start dates	41%

Some of those who operate a fixed cycle added comments to the effect that the employers they serve are satisfied with this but quite a few providers seem to aspire to delivering greater flexibility. Of the bulk who offer a range of start dates throughout the year around three cohorts seems to be the norm.

Delivery mode

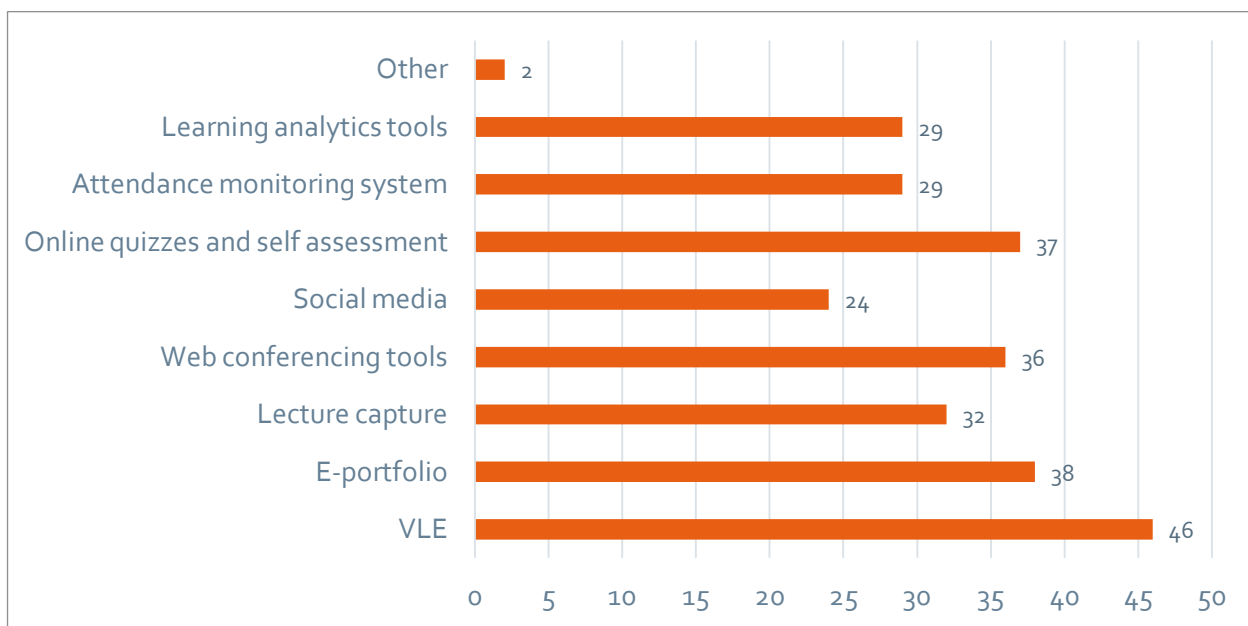
There is wide variation in the expected mode of delivery; as one respondent put it '*All options are on the table.*' Currently all options, including delivery in the employer's workplace, seem to be in use.



The block and day release modes are likely to involve blended learning in many cases and a number of respondents said that they would expect the proportion of online learning to increase.

Technologies in use

Respondents appeared mainly to talk about the technologies they are already using and will continue to use to varying degrees for apprenticeships. There were however a number of comments about the fact that the standard tools are not always a good fit for the apprenticeship model particularly in relation to access by apprentices, managers and workplace mentors in the employer's workplace.



About the challenges

We asked about the challenges providers are facing in delivering the new apprenticeship standards. The responses have been used to create our 'Painometer' that has helped to inform development of the forthcoming Jisc guidance on the topic.

Of the issues analysed it seems that only student motivation is not really a problem in relation to this type of learning.

Working with employers is throwing up a range of issues including managing the synergy between on and off the job learning and meeting employers information needs.

Unsurprisingly, meeting the data and information requirements of a system that is very much closer to the further education model is causing problems for higher education institutions.

What are the main challenges in delivering the new standards

