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An exploration of stakeholder perspectives on the modern degree Apprenticeship model

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Abstract

Apprenticeships offer a unique higher education pathway that combines relevant on-the-job training with formal higher education (Brookings 2021). This pathway can help to provide access to higher education and equip graduates with relevant skills while effectively funding higher education. In Ireland, government policy aims to expand the range of apprenticeships available and support 10,000 apprentices per year by 2025 (DFHERIS 2021). Launched in 2016, the BA (Honours) Insurance Practice Apprenticeship was the first honours degree apprenticeship programme in Ireland. It was developed in partnership with professional bodies and employers and provides an academic qualification, relevant employment and additional professional qualifications. This timely research seeks to explore the benefits and opportunities for the modern apprenticeship sector, studied through the lens of three key stakeholder groups: current apprentices, graduates and employers involved. An anonymous online qualitative survey (Braun et al. 2021) has been designed, with thematic analysis performed on over one hundred responses. Collected data provide a diverse range of perspectives related to the decision to enroll in an apprenticeship, the effectiveness of their higher education experience, early career progression following the apprenticeship and employer views on the importance of the apprenticeship pathway. Results offer an important preview of future trends in this leaning pathway and feature suggestions for best practice within the emergent non-traditional, modern apprenticeship sector.

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