

Promoting Employer Engagement in Built Environment Degree Apprenticeship Programmes

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Abstract

Built environment Degree apprenticeships (BEDA) are one of the government's strategies to address the skills gap, poor productivity and performance of the UK construction industry. These programmes emphasise a blend of academic and work-based learning to enable learners to develop the required competencies of the apprenticeship standards. To achieve successful outcomes, adequate employer engagement is required from the curricula design to workplace training and learner evaluation. However, some initial practices suggest insufficient employer engagement impacting the quality of learning and development of apprentices. To address this challenge, this study investigates the critical success factors (CSFs) for improving employer engagement in the design and delivery of learning in BEDA programmes in higher education in the UK. A qualitative approach was employed, involving a focus group session and semi-structured interviews to solicit the views of eighteen purposively selected BEDA key stakeholders on the CSFs for promoting employer engagement in the design and delivery of learning in BEDA programmes. Findings reveal sixteen CSFs necessary to support effective employer engagement in the design and delivery of learning in BEDA programmes. The study results provide key stakeholders, especially academics, with relevant information to support collaborative employer engagements to improve quality learning and experiences for apprentices in BEDA programmes. The study is the first to document the CSFs for promoting employer engagement in the design and delivery of learning in BEDA. It provides new insights into understanding the CSFs, which will inform decision-making and strategic thinking surrounding effective employer engagement in BEDA programmes.

Keywords: Employer engagement; curriculum design; work-based learning; critical success factors