

“POSSIBLY THE
BEST CAREER
ROUTE IN THE
WORLD?”

Apprenticeships:

**Achieving 98%
happiness, but are
they at risk?**

INTRODUCTION

THE INDUSTRY APPRENTICE COUNCIL (IAC) IS A COUNCIL OF CURRENT APPRENTICES – WE ENGAGE AND ACT ON BEHALF OF APPRENTICES IN THE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING (AME) SECTOR. EVERY YEAR WE RUN A SURVEY TO FIND OUT WHAT APPRENTICES ARE THINKING AND HOW WE CAN DO A BETTER JOB IN THE FUTURE TO DELIVER THE SKILLED PEOPLE THE UK NEEDS.

KEY FINDINGS

98% of apprentices are happy they chose to do an apprenticeship.

Industry Apprentice Council
Annual Survey 2017

The 2017 survey confirms what we already know - that apprenticeships are a really great career choice but schools, careers teachers and even parents are out of date in their perceptions. In our survey, 98% of apprentices say they are happy they chose an apprenticeship – that’s incredible but it’s not surprising. What we all love is that there is real career progression, we are valued, we are constantly learning and there are good jobs for us once we finish our training, without the debt faced by those choosing university.

So it’s frustrating that our choice is still treated as second rate at school, by politicians and careers advisers, with a service that’s not fit for purpose. Our members have heard countless stories from young people who’ve been deterred from taking the apprenticeship route. At the moment, only the most determined students are making it through and we’re missing out on great future engineers because of this.

Yet what other career choice – university, graduate training, college course or work experience would deliver these kinds of results?

Isn’t it time that the government sorted out an equal status at school for us? Putting in place proper advice services and rewarding schools that make sure their students properly understand apprenticeships as a great choice? And we should insist that all teachers go and see the best apprentices at work?

KEY FINDINGS

Careers advice is failing – only 22% are getting good advice and this figure is falling.

Industry Apprentice Council
Annual Survey 2017

For those students who do make it through, many still struggle to achieve parity with others who chose the university route. Apprentices want to be treated as equals and be recognised for the skilled professionals that we are.

We are really worried about the introduction of End Point Assessment (EPA) and what that will mean for apprentices – we don’t believe that EPA meets the needs of our employers and doesn’t fit with our learning styles.

There is a real fear that the new standards for apprenticeships in AME will mean an end to professional qualifications as part of our programmes. If this happens, this double whammy of losing the qualification and losing the continual assessment process is likely to create a two-tier system of apprenticeships.

The large employers will continue to do what they know produces the best skilled apprentices (i.e. include qualifications and continual assessment) but smaller employers will save money and go for the minimum standard. There may no longer be a universally recognised apprenticeship – despite this guarantee of standard quality being a key part of the new standards process - and we will go back to the old days when only those trained by the “Rolls Royces” will be recognised for their skills globally.



KEY FINDINGS

92% of apprentices want formal qualifications to be mandatory as part of the new standards.

Industry Apprentice Council
Annual Survey 2017

The following report sets out the views of almost 1200 apprentices; often frank and always honest, these are the authentic voices of young apprentices working right now in engineering and manufacturing across the UK.

We’re passionate about the choice we have made but we want employers, educators and politicians to deliver much better careers advice and to understand our concerns. We need a plan to deliver AME apprenticeships that will encourage more students to take up an apprenticeship so we can develop the great British engineers and leaders of tomorrow.

ANN WATSON Q&A

THE IAC IS SUPPORTED BY THE SEMTA GROUP, SO WE SPOKE TO ANN WATSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AT SEMTA, ABOUT WHAT SHE THOUGHT OF THE REPORT AND WHAT THE LESSONS ARE TO TAKE AWAY.



Ann Watson
Chief Executive,
Semta Group

1. Can you tell us what you found most interesting about the results in the report?

I instantly thought that the 98% figure for how many apprentices are happy in their jobs was just amazing. What other career choice would provide that kind of result? I can't think of any that would, and it's reinforced when you talk to apprentices. They almost always tell you how much they enjoy their work and how much satisfaction they get.

I also think that the negative feelings about the introduction of End Point Assessment stand out. It's very clear that apprentices don't think EPA is the right system for assessment for a number of reasons and they are also really worried that the requirement for formal qualifications will be scrapped when the new standards are finalised. At Semta we've been arguing that qualifications are a really important part of the apprenticeship system, so I hope that the government will listen to what apprentices are saying and make sure those requirements are kept in the standards. The good news is that so far, employers agree with the apprentices – qualifications are a part of the majority of engineering standards they have agreed to date.

2. Why do you think so many apprentices are happy in their jobs?

None of you were surprised by that 98% result and neither was I, to be honest – but I think most people reading it would be. It's absolutely not the norm and we should do more to celebrate that our apprentices just love what they do and the choice they've made.

And why are they happy? I think the answer is in the results of the survey. Young people are looking for four things when they start their careers – the ability to earn money, feeling valued and progressing in the work they do, good career prospects and qualifications that set them up for the future. Apprenticeships offer all these, without the debt of a university course – and you can end up with the same degree at the end of an apprenticeship that you would have if you'd gone to university. As the cost of going to university has risen, a lot

more people are looking at an apprenticeship and realising that it was always going to be the best fit for them. The challenge in the future, of course, is to make sure that everyone continues to be really happy in these roles and that we make engineering apprenticeships even better.

3. At our IAC meetings we've had long conversations about End Point Assessment and why we think it isn't right for us. How big a risk is it that we will lose our continual assessment?

Potentially it's a big risk for the government to be pushing ahead with EPA when clearly apprentices themselves don't support it. The concern is that assessing an apprenticeship with a single test at the end doesn't work for quite a lot of apprentices. We know for example, that boys perform much better with single tests whereas women and girls perform much better under continuous assessment and that's backed up by what has been said in the survey as well.

My main worry is that it could make apprenticeships less attractive to young people looking at how to build a career just at the time when we really need to be attracting more, especially technical apprentices in engineering.

4. One of the things that really annoys apprentices at the moment is that careers advice in schools is awful. Some apprentices we spoke to were even discouraged by their schools from taking up an apprenticeship. Why are schools and careers advice still so far behind?

The big issue is that schools are funded if someone goes into sixth form – and not if they go into an apprenticeship. This skews everything. There is still a really outdated perception of apprenticeships as being dirty, dead end jobs – a million miles from the experiences of engineering apprentices working in a modern factory building the aircraft and engines of our future.

A few years ago, the government set a target for 50% of students to go to university. I think most people now recognise this was not a great move and has done a lot of damage and we're now in a situation where some students have invested in a degree and then moved into the job market into roles that didn't actually need one.

ANN WATSON Q&A CONTINUED

It made teachers think that only university was a good career choice. The cap on places has now been lifted completely so every young person will be able to go to university – meaning we risk even more pressure for young people to follow a path that is wrong for them, just because schools think that makes them look good.

That attitude needs to be tackled – we need information in place so teachers understand what apprenticeships are on offer and what they entail in the same way that they understand university courses. We need government to reward schools that actively push apprenticeships in key areas, like engineering – and Ofsted outstanding grades should only go to schools with excellent apprenticeship careers advice.

We know there are some schools that break the mould and actively promote the apprenticeships route, but we need this to be the norm rather than the exception. To be honest, if I were a head teacher reading this report I think I’d be quite ashamed that so many schools are a barrier rather than an encourager for apprentices.

5. One of the other things discussed by the Industry Apprentice Council was how few people know that apprenticeships are such a good career choice. Why do you think that is?

It goes back a bit to what I was saying about schools. The first thing is a lack of information. Teachers and parents don’t have enough information about apprenticeships and what they offer as a way to start a career. We know family support is really important to recruiting more apprentices and this can only happen if parents have the right knowledge. Look at the proportion of survey respondents who said they’d changed others’ minds by doing their apprenticeships – the more people see of apprenticeships in action, the more they realise they’re a great option for so many young people, including their own children. It helps to overcome the idea that apprenticeships are good, but “for other people’s children”.

I think the other barrier is too many people not understanding that apprenticeships have changed. Most people think of “trade” apprenticeships like joinery or plumbing and of course those still exist and can be a fantastic option. But there is now a wealth of new opportunities available as a result of emerging technologies, ranging from designing an advanced jet engine to coding vital software. So we need people to understand apprenticeships as they are today, not how they were fifty or even twenty years ago.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

THE RESEARCH CONSISTED OF AN ONLINE SURVEY OF CURRENT APPRENTICES, PREDOMINANTLY WORKING IN THE UK’S AME SECTOR. THIS WAS CONDUCTED OVER A THREE MONTH PERIOD, FROM JANUARY TO APRIL 2017 AND 1,198 APPRENTICES CONTRIBUTED.

The survey results were supplemented with further data from an IAC focus group with apprentices on 11 May 2017.

APPRENTICES ARE HAPPY IN THEIR JOBS

The current system for AME apprenticeships is working and is popular with the vast majority of apprentices; 98% told us they are happy in their chosen career path and the majority have recommended apprenticeships to someone else since starting their course.

Three main areas stood out as reasons why apprentices were happy in their choice:

1. The ability to earn while learning

Being able to earn money on the job was rated by 82% of apprentices as one of the main reasons for their choice. Doing a fair day's work for a fair day's pay is important and contributes to a feeling of being valued.



“An apprenticeship offers great opportunities to learn without the financial burden of university”

Alex Morrell
Mechanical Design Apprentice
Asmech Systems



“An apprenticeship provides you with experience and qualifications while getting paid a full time wage.”

Rod Purshouse
Laboratory Technician
Bridon-Bekaert The Ropes Group

2. Good career progression

Career progression is an important part of being happy in their choice - 76% of apprentices rated it highly.



“I always knew what I wanted to do from an early age; an apprenticeship meant I could get straight into the job I wanted.”

Amy Owen
Electronic Engineering Apprentice
MBDA UK Ltd



“My apprenticeship gave me more options to experience the industry that graduates don't get, so I get broader development.”

Alexander Deakin
Supplier Technical Assistance
Degree Apprentice
Jaguar Land Rover

Our research respondents say apprentices in advanced manufacturing and engineering have an advantage over graduates who come into the industry with no experience behind them. The extra practical experience of an apprenticeship is a bonus to employers and can lead to better progression.

3. Recognised qualifications

73% of apprentices said that getting a nationally recognised qualification as part of their apprenticeship was a key consideration. Qualifications range from NVQs to masters degrees and a big attraction for many apprentices was the lack of debt at the end of their course.

“I will earn a master's degree with no debt and will also have 4 years full-time work experience.”

Joseph Morley
Manufacturing Management Trainee
Rolls-Royce

WHAT INFLUENCE DID THE FOLLOWING HAVE ON YOUR DECISION TO DO AN APPRENTICESHIP? (Multiple response – strong influence totals)



“I love what I do and have learnt a lot.”

Millie Boulton
Commercial Apprentice
Tata Steel

“I have had many jobs and this is by far the most rewarding for me, I am constantly learning.”

Joel Shevins
Apprentice
Transport Planner
Atkins

CAREERS ADVICE ISN'T WORKING

Young people aren't getting proper careers advice at school, the advice on offer is getting worse and provision is getting patchier. This long term problem is making it more difficult for employers and training providers to recruit the apprentices they need for the future.



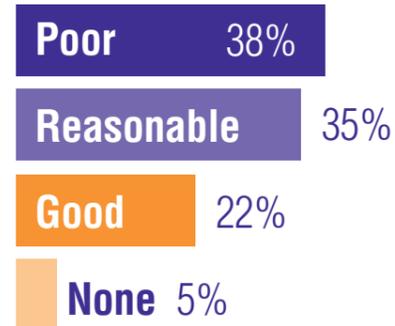
"School careers advice at the moment is a pipeline for UCAS and applying to university. It doesn't even have to matter what you study as long as the school knows you're going to university."

Ryan Carey
Project Management
Degree Apprentice
BAE Systems



Only 22% of the apprentices we spoke to received good or very good advice from school or college. Shockingly, 5% got no advice at all and more young people are getting poor advice - nearly 40% of apprentices say the advice they got was bad or very bad.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE CAREERS INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE YOU RECEIVED AT SCHOOL OR COLLEGE?



Many schools aren't promoting apprenticeships as an option - teachers themselves don't have enough information about how apprenticeships have changed in recent years or how they benefit students.

One apprentice said: "There's a consensus across all sectors that teachers and careers advisors aren't as well linked to labour market needs as they should be and they're not aware of the opportunities that are out there."

Others said that they only succeeded in securing the right path because they had a clear view on what they wanted or because a family member had experience and encouraged them.

Too many schools assume that students will automatically go on to higher education.

Anyone who doesn't want to take that option is sidelined or at worst disciplined with no thought to whether an apprenticeship could be a better option. One apprentice said: "The teachers at my school frantically implored me to change my mind when I chose an apprenticeship."

The number of young people being encouraged to do an apprenticeship at school or college has actually decreased this year (down to just 21% from 24% in 2016) while the numbers being discouraged have increased (up to 20% from 16% in 2016).

And this is significantly worse for young women - 85% of young women said their school or college had put higher education as the number one option for school leavers against 77% of young men experiencing this.

Of the apprentices surveyed, 30% of young women were not encouraged to do an apprenticeship by their school or college, compared to just 17% of young men. Fewer young women were even given information about apprenticeships - 35% compared to 41% of young men.

Apprentices in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector however, appear to be increasingly proactive in attempting to counteract bad careers advice by visiting schools directly to deliver careers advice events and talks - 43% said they had been into schools in 2017, up from 32% in 2016. Women and girls are especially proactive, with over half (53%) participating in outreach activities.

30% of female respondents were not encouraged to do an apprenticeship by their school or college, compared to just 17% of males

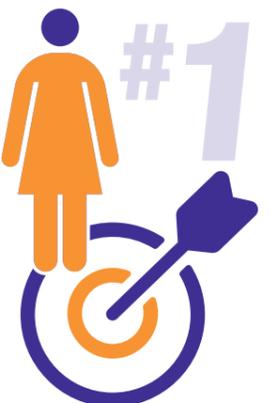


"I know someone who decided that they didn't want to go to university; they wanted to do an apprenticeship so they didn't make any UCAS applications and because of this their school disciplined them!"

Alexander Deakin
Supplier Technical
Assistance
Degree Apprentice
Jaguar Land Rover



85% of female respondents said their school or college put **higher education** as the **number one pathway** to aim for



PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS MUST BE A MANDATORY PART OF THE NEW APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS

Most apprentices love their apprenticeship – even if it is often a struggle to find and secure. But recent changes have apprentices worried and could undermine the successful system that’s in place for the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector.

The introduction of End Point Assessment in 2017 is one concern. Nearly 90% of apprentices disagree with its introduction – and opposition is equally reflected among men and women. One said: “It is unfair to bring years of study to an end during one morning! Apprenticeships are about gaining experience, not memorising answers.”

This typifies the response to EPA amongst apprentices; the government still has a lot of work to do to convince everyone that apprenticeships with EPA are still an excellent option worth pursuing.

Another apprentice said “Within my apprenticeship continuous assessment helps me to improve and build upon my weaknesses and carry on building my strengths.”

Apprentices are also worried about the new apprenticeship standards for advanced manufacturing and engineering; specifically dropping the mandatory requirement for professional, nationally recognised qualifications as part of the new standards.

“Governments have created what must be the world’s best career route for young people – where else would we get 98% of under-25s saying they are happy with their career choice? But more than 90 per cent of apprentices oppose the Government’s removal of mandated qualifications, and there is a lot of unease about the focus on the End Point Assessment as the primary measure of an apprentice’s achievement.”

John Coombes
Toolmaker (Laboratory Analysis and Testing) Apprentice
Ford Motor Company Ltd



Apprentices understand the government’s plan to introduce the apprenticeship certificate as the industry standard qualification, but they don’t believe this is enough; a certificate does not recognise the specific competencies that an apprentice has learned and is not necessarily transferrable between companies or widely recognised. As it stands, apprentices say the certificate is not useful and could undermine the parity of apprenticeships as serious, attractive options.



Nearly **90%** said they **disagree** with the introduction of the **End Point Assessment**

92% want **formal qualifications** to be a **mandatory requirement** of the **new standards**



If formal qualifications are not made mandatory, new standards can be agreed without them, resulting in a two-tier system and reinforcing the prejudice of some that apprenticeships are just “cheap labour”.

This will make apprenticeships less attractive to young people and make it harder to attract the best candidates.

“It seems unfair to have your entire apprenticeship and its success based on a single test at the end, your progress and competence should be reviewed throughout the entire apprenticeship.”

Tom Clayton-Marshall
Airbus
Engineering Undergraduate Apprentice

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools need to improve careers advice

Schools are not doing enough to educate students about apprenticeships and teachers do not have the knowledge to promote them as a good option for their students. With the 2018 Year of Engineering approaching, schools have a fantastic opportunity to do more to engage with students and parents, including delivering activities that work such as:

- Hosting careers fairs specifically for apprenticeships and inviting parents
- Getting former apprentices to talk to students
- Organising work placements for interested students

2. Government actions to improve industry apprenticeships for the future

Getting more apprentices into the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector is essential to close the skills gap and secure the UK as a competitive player in a global market. The results of the survey point to a clear way forward for policymakers:

- A statutory requirement for schools and colleges to promote non-university routes with no penalties for young people who choose apprenticeships against degrees
- No school should be awarded outstanding by Ofsted unless they deliver quality advice on apprenticeships
- The inclusion of formal qualifications in apprenticeship standards wherever employers and apprentices believe them to be beneficial, with this as the main criterion for their use
- Continuous assessment alongside an End Point Assessment and allowing for evidence gathered continuously throughout the apprenticeship to be part of the EPA
- A strong, transparent and open recruitment process for the selection of members of the Institute for Apprenticeships apprentice panel

ABOUT SEMTA



SEMTA WORKS FOR AND ON BEHALF OF EMPLOYERS, CREATING SKILLED ENGINEERS FOR THE FUTURE.

Semta ensures employers in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector have the skills they need by influencing government policy; helping fill the skills gap; and advising employers on recruiting, training and assessing apprentices. Semta is a charitable body with three trading divisions; EAL for assessments, Semta

Apprenticeship Service for managing and delivering apprenticeships, and Semta International, taking the UK skills quality brand around the world. Profits are reinvested in skills development for the future in areas such as research, policy advice, skills awards and helping employers anticipate engineering skills trends.

ABOUT THE IAC



THE INDUSTRY APPRENTICE COUNCIL (IAC) HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS THE UK'S INDUSTRY VOICE FOR APPRENTICES.

Founded and supported as part of the Semta Group, the IAC is predominantly made up of young apprentices from the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector throughout the UK.

It is recognised by government as an important part of the apprenticeship debate, with members regularly invited to

address MPs, peers and leaders in both industry and education.

All members of the IAC are passionate and have their own stories as to why they followed the apprenticeship path. They regularly share them at careers fairs, in schools and through the media to inspire the next generation to consider apprenticeships as a career option.

If you would like to discuss the results of the survey, the recommendations or any other part of Semta and IAC's work, please contact our Customer Service team on 0846 643 9001 or email customerservices@semta.org.uk

JOIN US



THE IAC HAS THE BACKING OF SOME OF THE UK'S MOST HIGH PROFILE EMPLOYERS AND CONSISTS OF APPRENTICES WORKING ACROSS THE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING SECTOR.

We are always looking for new members to join us. If you are an apprentice working in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector and are passionate about apprenticeships, we would like you to get in touch.

There are so many reasons why being part of the IAC is a great opportunity for apprentices:

1. They have the opportunity to meet like minded apprentices from companies of all sizes and share best practice
2. Members have the chance to discuss their views on apprenticeships on a national platform through the media and key events

3. Career and professional development – the IAC supports the professional development of apprentices, they can develop their communication and analytical skills in a supported environment

4. The views of IAC members are sought after by employers, MPs and the government; our members are often invited to speak in Parliament sharing their experiences

5. Inspire the next generation - our members are passionate about apprenticeships and the IAC gives members the chance to showcase apprenticeships in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector to inspire the career aspirations of young people

To find out how you can get involved please contact our Customer Service team on 0845 643 9001 or email customerservices@semta.org.uk.

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2017 IAC SURVEY RESEARCH REPORT

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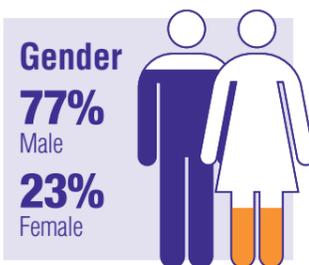
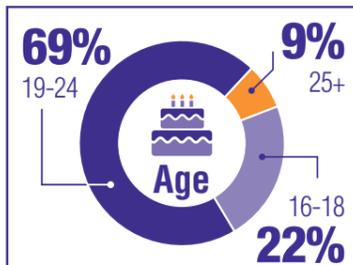
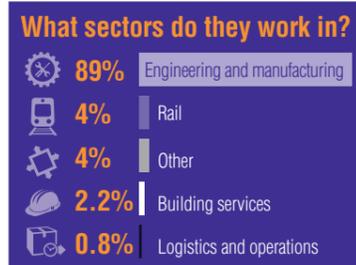
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#IACSurvey**

w: www.semta.org.uk/iac

📘: /IndustryApprenticeCouncil

2017 IAC SURVEY RESULTS

1,198
survey
respondents



Only **22%** rated their careers advice as **good or very good**

98% of apprentices are happy they chose to do an apprenticeship

82% said being able to **earn money on the job** was seen as the **biggest influence** on respondents' decision to do an apprenticeship

21% said they were **encouraged** to do an apprenticeship at school or college

30% of female respondents were **not** encouraged to do an apprenticeship by their school or college, compared to just **17%** of males

91% have **inspired others** to do an apprenticeship

85% of female respondents said their school or college put **higher education** as the **number one pathway** to aim for

43% have **visited schools to deliver careers advice** or presentations on apprenticeships

Nearly **90%** said they **disagree** with the introduction of the **End Point Assessment**

92% want **formal qualifications** to be a **mandatory requirement** of the new standards

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