Usage guidelines

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES IN SERVICE DELIVERY OF THE CHARTERED MANAGER DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP BY AN ALTERNATIVE PROVIDER.

NICHOLAS MAPLETOFT

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Declaration

No portion of this work referred to in this Professional Doctoral Report has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning. Except in so far, as stated in the acknowledgements to this report the text itself, the work contained herein is that of the author.

Nicholas Mapletoft, February 2020

Abstract

Introduction

This study undertakes a critical review of the strategic and operational challenges in service delivery of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) by an alternative provider of higher education (HE), following the implementation of the Apprenticeship Levy in England. It explores some of the main tensions that are likely to affect the success of establishing an alternative provider of HE and degree apprenticeship delivery, taking account of provider staff, employers and learners.

The subject of study

The intrinsic case study company is the University Centre Quayside (UCQ), a small market disrupting alternative provider of HE delivering the CMDA. UCQ provides adult education predominantly in the North East of England but is increasingly expanding nationwide.

The study explores the evolution of HE, the concept of 'value', WBL and the introduction of degree apprenticeships, and how these themes then converge, the resulting tensions and possible impact on success.

Research approach

Following an interpretivist and constructivist philosophy, mixed methods were employed involving questionnaires, then interviews and focus groups for triangulation of data across employers, students and staff. Quantitative data was analysed in Excel, looking for statistical and visual differences, and using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), qualitative results were transcribed and then thematically analysed using NVivo.

Key findings

The key findings are that there is a significant difference of understanding between provider staff, the employers and students as to what a 'higher' education should be, especially in terms of civicness. National employers want national, rather than place-based, provision. Programme contextualisation is very important to the employers and the students; but can be challenging for the provider. A majority of apprentices

believe that their employer (as the perceived funder) should see a financial return on their investment, equally apprentices felt they should personally achieve a financial benefit from participation.

Employers appear to be formalizing their training needs analysis, perhaps in response to the Levy and the availability of higher level programmes.

Contribution

There is much written about private provision of HE, marketisation and consumerization, but there is little research. There is even less research originating from within a private provider. This study contributes to the HE WBL community and although the main beneficiary is UCQ, the results are intended to be of value to alternative and existing HE providers delivering degree apprenticeships.

Degree apprenticeships are new (in England) and there is little understanding of the tensions between the providers, employers, students and funders, and how they may be overcome. This study contributes to the body of knowledge in this area and is expected to stimulate further debate and study within the community of practice.

Conclusions

This study found that employers, learners and provider staff believe it is important that there should be a return from the degree apprenticeship that should be of value to the employer and the learner, but measuring such value is difficult. The degree apprenticeship should take account of recognition of prior learning, however there is no standardized approach. Assessments need to be heavily contextualized, and staff and students differ in opinion on whether this is the case. There is a suggestion that providers need to deliver nationally and with industry specialism(s), and there is disagreement between provider staff, and employers and their staff, on whether the programme should include civic development. HE work-based learning providers may need to share resources in order to cost effectively deliver nationally. Employers do not see themselves as really being 'in the driving seat' because the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Institute for Apprenticeships make and change policy and pricing to suit their political agenda.

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Appendix E - Abbreviations and Acronyms

AoC – Association of Colleges

AELP – Association of Employment and Learning Providers

APA - American Psychological Association

APL – Accredited prior learning

APEL – Accreditation of prior experiential learning

BCR – Business cost ratio

BIS – Department of business innovation and skills

CMDA – Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship

CMI – Chartered Management Institute

DTI – Department of trade and industry

DWP – Department of works and pensions

ERDF – European regional development fund

ESF – European social fund

ESFA – Education & Skills Funding Agency

EU – European union

EZI – Egon Zehnder International

FE – Further education

GB – Great Britain

GVA – Gross value add

HE – Higher education

HEFCE – Higher Education Funding Council for England

HND – Higher national diploma

IAG – Information, advice and guidance

ICT – Information and communication technology

IfA – Institute for Apprenticeships

INTJ – Introverted, Intuitive, Thinking, Judging (Myers Briggs)

ISO – International standards organisation

LEA – Local Education Authority

LEP – Local enterprise partnership

MD – Managing director

NE – North east

OFFA – Office for fair access

OfS – Office for Students

Ofsted – Office for standards in education

OM – Owner manager

ONA – Organisation needs analysis

OU – The Open University

QAA – The Quality Assurance Agency

QS – the intrinsic case study organisation

R&D – Research and development

ROI – Return on investment

RoL – Return on leadership

RPL – Recognition of prior learning

RPEL – Recognition of prior experiential learning

SFA – Skills funding agency

SME – Small and medium employers

TDAP – Taught degree awarding powers

TNA – Training needs analysis

VARK – Visual, aural, read/write, and kinaesthetic sensory

VLE – Virtual learning environment

UK – United Kingdom

UVAC – University Vocational Awards Council

WBL – Work-based learning

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Dedications

Thank you to my daughters Charlotte and Amelia for not making me feel guilty when I was studying and researching. Thank you, my parents, for believing in me. Thank you, Penny, (the dog!) for being a sounding board on our walks as I developed my arguments.

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1 Introduction and background

The UK government is keen to encourage new, alternative providers of higher education (HE) (DBIS, 2016a) because it believes that the current HE landscape is anticompetitive (McGettigan 2013; 2017a; 2017b). The belief is that new providers will bring specialist provision and that the result will be greater choice and better value, for students (DBIS, 2016a). There is a good deal written about the aspects associated with private, alternative provision, with Levy (2010) stating that it is the most frequently debated subject of literature globally. The vast majority is written by academics working in existing higher education institutes (HEIs) and it is clear that they are in opposition. But it is not usually research and it does not normally originate from within a private, alternative provider (Shah, Vu, & Stanford, 2019). What makes this study innovative is that it originates from within such an alternative provider as it establishes itself as a provider of HE WBL of a degree apprenticeship in England (see portfolio section 2, 2.1; 2.3 and section 3, 3.1- 3.3.7 and section 4, 4.1 – 4.7).

Apprenticeships in England have undergone many changes since their introduction for the craft professions in the Middle Ages. Despite changes to the structure of an apprenticeship, a constant is that it involves an employed individual gaining knowledge, learning skills and developing behaviours both on and off the job. Recent reformation of the UK Government's apprenticeship programme started with the Richard Review (2012). The subsequent apprenticeship qualification reforms should by 2020 (DBIS, 2015) see the replacement of existing awarding body led apprenticeship frameworks with employer led apprenticeship standards, including new degree apprenticeship standards (SFA, 2016). Importantly, the degree apprenticeship must equally assess the apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours (HM Government, 2015a). The first English degree apprenticeships were launched in 2015 following several years of development by the Trailblazer groups (DBIS, 2015). One of the earliest approved degree apprenticeships was the Chartered

Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) standard, a standard that includes a full UK management honours degree and Chartered Manager status.

The Chartered Management Institute (CMI) planned for there to be 10,000 apprentices registered on the CMDA standard by 2020 (CMI, 2016). Across England, via all the participating universities, HE colleges and alternative providers, there were approximately 1,000 active degree apprentices in August 2017 (HEFCE, 2017) of the 2,000 level 6 and 7 starts in 2016/17 (Powell, 2019). The CMI confirmed that there were approximately 500 CMDA registrations in September 2017, up from 60 apprentices registered on the CMDA in July 2016 (Offord, 2016). 2017/18 saw 11,000 level 6 and 7 starts overall (Powell, 2019).

Funding for the apprenticeships is via a new corporate hypothecated tax that became active in April 2017. All UK companies are in scope to pay the additional 0.5% tax on top of their payroll fees, however, the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced an off-set allowance of £15,000 which means that, for now, only employers with a wage bill above £3 million per year (or to be precise, £250,000 in any one month,) will make a payment. HMRC take this tax from UK companies via their monthly payroll (PAYE) and it is paid into the Apprenticeship Levy (DBIS, 2016c), at which point it becomes 'public money'.

Crucial to the success of the new degree apprenticeships is the response and commitment of HEIs to deliver, and both learners and employers (UVAC, 2015) to participate, whilst ensuring academic integrity and quality assurance (CMI, HEFCE, QAA and ESFA). The degree apprenticeships put even more focus on the employer and the student's vocation than other WBL. WBL that often comes under criticism, being called a crude instrumentalism (Collini, 2012) and those that work with employers being referred to as entering a Faustian Pact (Collini, 2018). It is referred to as a Humboltdian nightmare and we are told that Newman will be turning in his grave (ibid). But is it really so bad? Views tend to be polarized and there are few agnostics (Barnett, 2018).

This research is centered on the University Centre Quayside (UCQ), as it seeks to overcome the practice vs policy tensions of the CMDA. The research will be undertaken in conjunction with and on behalf of, UCQ, a market disrupting challenger private university centre that operates throughout England within private, public and voluntary sectors, across further and higher education (FE and HE), delivering apprenticeships and the CMDA. Working seminally and cross-sectorally means that UCQ operates according to different and sometimes opposing norms whilst in a state of becoming. Gibbs (2010) suggests that as people we are always becoming, that we never become. Barnett (p. 132, 2012) proposes that this is true of universities, that they are multivariate, multi-characteristic, multi-modal and ever emerging entities, they are "always a becoming-university". To suggest that UCQ is or wishes to become a single type of university is inaccurate and overly simplistic, UCQ is, as Barnett (2010; 2012) suggests, a mosaic. UCQ is 'private' (Barnett, 2012), 'business-facing' (ibid), 'Mode-2' (Nowotny et al., 2001), 'open' (Peters, et al., 2012 in Barnett, 2013) and 'virtual' (Robins, 2003).

There is much discussion about UK universities, whether they are public or private (Barnett, 2012; McGettigan, 2013; Collini, 2012; Collini, 2018), indeed they demonstrate characteristics of both the public and private sectors, so may be viewed as quasi-public or quasi-private, with the OECD classifying British universities as 'government-dependent private universities' (Collini, p.28, 2018). Whether an organisation is classified as public or private is dependent on ownership, legal status, exercise of authority, how it is funded and whether it provides a public service. This is likely to influence what the organisation does and how it does it. What was, in the mid 20th century, a clear bifurcation between public and private sectors, is increasingly convergent. Universities diversified their offering including increased third-stream activities (Watson, 2014), resulting in the entrepreneurial university (Barnett, 2012) and more recently the corporate university (ibid).

UCQ is a UK Listed Body which has institutional approval and degree validation via The Open University. UCQ has been an active participant on the Trailblazer standards development teams and is one of the first higher education institutions involved in the CMDA Trailblazer delivery. (See portfolio section 2.3)

This is an early investigation, which began before the launch of the Apprenticeship Levy and continued throughout its infancy. The research endeavored to discover: the main tensions in delivering degree apprenticeships and how they may be overcome; staff experience of delivering the CMDA degree apprenticeship; the potential likelihood of the CMDA apprenticeship being a success. This study has an emphasis on Mode 2 knowledge (Fulton, Kuit, Sanders & Smith, 2013). It should help UCQ to better understand and overcome the tensions associated with becoming an established alternative provider of HE and in delivery of a degree apprenticeship by considering not only *what* UCQ should be doing, but also the *how*. The study will be of value to the WBL community of practice, especially alternative providers, and will ultimately benefit employers and potential apprentices considering the work-based degree apprenticeship programme.

This section outlines the structure of the thesis and provides a subject introduction.

This thesis is structured into six main chapters:

This first chapter:

- provides an introduction to the subject;
- outlines the overall research question, the aim and objectives;
- establishes the study rationale;
- outlines the way the study will be undertaken;
- describes the researcher's motivation for undertaking this study;

- provides an overview of the linkages between this report and the portfolio.

Following on from this chapter, Chapter 2 reviews of the extant literature relating to this study, Chapter 3 contains the research methodology. Chapter 4 provides the results of quantitative research, Chapter 5 presents the findings from the qualitative research and an analysis and synthesis against the research questions. Following on, Chapter 6 draws conclusions and provides recommendation.

1.1 Aim, objectives and research questions

The research questions, aim and objectives of this research project are outlined below.

The author is seeking to answer the question:

"What are the delivery tensions that an alternative degree apprenticeship provider experiences and how may they be overcome?"

The aim of the research is to explore the tensions experienced by a North East provider of the new degree apprenticeships, in order to make a positive impact on practice.

This involved an investigation of the following objectives:

- RO1: A review of the literature on degree apprenticeships; Identification of the key issues for further research;

- RO2: An investigation of provider staff experiences in establishing and delivering a degree apprenticeship, comparison of the degree apprentice learner experience, assessing the importance and need for degree apprenticeship(s).

- RO3: A detailed analysis of an alternative provider of a degree apprenticeship, exploring the strategic and tactical issues relating to delivery tensions, looking at how these tensions may be overcome in order to improve practice.

- RO4: The development of a model that supports alternative HE providers to understand and address the main difficulties in establishing and delivering a degree apprenticeship, to positively affect practice.

The overarching question can be divided into the following research questions:

- RQ1: How does the learner (apprentice) experience compare with their expectation(s)?

- RQ2: What are the delivery tensions faced by staff delivering the CMDA and how can they be overcome?

- RQ3: What is the likely situation for a North East based alternative provider of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA)?

This research into the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship focuses contextually on the University Centre Quayside (UCQ) – a market disruptor - delivering the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship in England (see portfolio section 4.2). The research focuses on delivery in England, exploring responses from learners, employers, and strategic and operational staff from the provider.

The main purpose of the study is to support the intrinsic case study company, UCQ, to help them successfully deliver the degree apprenticeship standard. The study is also expected to be of benefit to other alternative providers as a community of practice through the development of a model that identifies and

supports providers to overcome the difficulties associated with establishing and delivering a degree apprenticeship.

1.2 Motivation

The motivation for selecting this particular research subject was based upon five interconnecting factors:

- Researching a topic that I am passionate about, providing an alternative higher education experience to more vocationally minded students (see portfolio section two and section three)
- Undertaking research that will help UCQ to be a success (see portfolio section two)
- Selecting a topic which is seminal and currently the subject of much debate in the academic and vocational work-based learning communities (see portfolio section four)
- Exploration in an area that will strengthen my own professional and academic profile (see portfolio section four)
- Identifying an area of research that will continue to be a viable are of ongoing research for me following completion of the professional doctorate (see portfolio section four)

I believe that this research study will be of value to me personally and professionally, that it will support UCQ's growth strategy and plan to achieve degree awarding powers and then to become a full university. I also believe that the findings and contribution to practice and knowledge, will be of interest and value to the community of practice, other HE work-based learning providers. (See portfolio section 1.9 and section 2.1)

1.3 Report and portfolio structure

This submission consists of this research report together with a portfolio of supporting evidence. Together they provide an identification, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the key themes arising from the setting up and delivery on the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship. These themes will inform the development of a supporting model that may be used by members of the community of practice, to enhance their degree apprenticeship delivery.

Report Structure

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 Literature	Chapter 3 Methodology	Chapters 4&5 Results	Chapter 6 Conclusions

Section 1 1989-2013	**Section 2** 2014-2015	**Section 3** 2016	**Section 4** 2017-2019
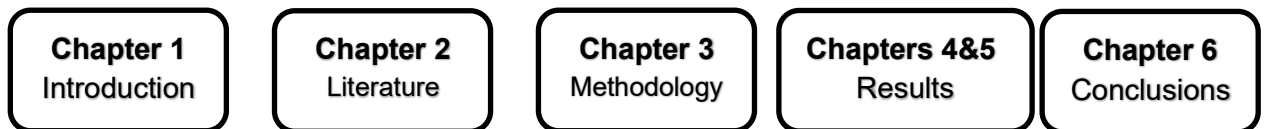
Portfolio Structure

Figure 1.1 – Diagram showing the structural linkages between the Report and the Portfolio

1.3.1 Report structure

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter provides a detailed critical review of the published academic and commercial literature appertaining to the areas under investigation: the higher education approach; learner type and motivation; work-based higher education; determining value for employers and learners.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter presents and describes the research methodology that will be employed in order to answer the research question which is at the heart of this thesis. This chapter
introduces and provides the background to the research investigation. It details the overarching aim of the research and the question that this study is to answer: "What are the delivery tensions that an alternative degree apprenticeship provider experiences and how may they be overcome?"; it then introduces the objectives of this research study. This chapter also details the area of focus and purpose of the research, the contribution to practice and knowledge.

Chapter 4 – Findings from and analysis of the questionnaire(s)

This chapter presents the results of the staff questionnaire and the learner questionnaire and then an examination and analysis of the data.

Chapter 5 – Findings from and analysis of the interviews and focus groups, discussion and synthesis

This chapter presents the results of the staff, employer and learner interviews, and then an examination and analysis of the data, discussion and synthesis of the findings amongst the research groupings and with the literature.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter includes a reflection on the study together with recommendations for UCQ, for the wider WBL community of practice, and for further activity and study.

1.3.2 Portfolio structure

My portfolio documents and evidences my personal journey of discovery and learning, starting as an undergraduate and then throughout my career and research study. It includes evidence of my professional practice and wider contributions to the work-based learning community of practice. The portfolio consists of four chapters, each related to UCQ and the setting up to deliver degree apprenticeships:

Section 1 (1989 – 2013)

The first chapter reflects and evidences what happened before I decided to set up UCQ and to deliver the degree apprenticeship. This starts with my undergraduate degree, through establishing the Nimis business, reflection on the quinquennial cycles of change and my own personal growth during that quarter of a century.

Section 2 (2014-2015)

In the second chapter I reflect on the motivators and agents of change that led to me setting up UCQ and the creation of a degree apprenticeship programme. This includes my business review and analysis, sectoral analysis and personal motivation to enter higher education (as a disruptor) and to deliver on degree apprenticeships. It also details participation on the

Trailblazer groups and parliamentary attendance and input, together with details of my qualifications and fellowships.

Section 3 (2016)

In chapter three I detail what was involved in the setting up of UCQ. This includes the various Gap Analyses showing what we would need in order to apply for Degree Validation and Institutional Approval. Evidence includes the new organisation structure, policies and procedure documents, the BA (Hons) Professional Management degree programme I wrote with my colleagues with input from employer and learner focus groups, the CMI, ESFA, QAA and The Open University. Included are links to the brochures, Student Handbook, website, Strategic Plan and other engagement and promotional materials I created with two of my colleagues.

Section 4 (2017-2019)

The final portfolio chapter details my experience of running the degree apprenticeship programme. This evidence includes the creation, monitoring and review of the UCQ Sales & Marketing strategy, student and provider focus groups, engagement with regional sector and employer groups, running UCQ engagement sessions, and interaction with my communities of practice.

1.4 Community of practice and contribution

The external community of practice is the Higher Education Work-Based Learning sector (HEWBL), in particular alternative providers of HEWBL. The community includes the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) members and the Chartered Management Institute (CMI). As a validated partner of the Open University, UCQ is a member of the Open University Validated Partners network (OUVP) which consists of HE/FE colleges and alternative providers of higher education.

The study will make an original contribution to the community of practice and in particular to UCQ. (See portfolio section 2, 2.3 & 2.4 and section 4, 4.5 – 4.7)

Degree apprenticeships are new and as such there is little known about the various tensions and how they may be overcome. This study will contribute to knowledge in the area of setting up and running a degree apprenticeship, informing stakeholders in the UK and internationally.

1.5 Summary

This chapter has introduced and provided the background to the research investigation. It details the overarching aim of the research and the question that this study is to answer: "What are the delivery tensions that an alternative degree apprenticeship provider experiences and how may they be overcome?"; it then introduces the objectives of this research study. This chapter details the area of focus and purpose of the research, the contribution to practice and knowledge. This is followed by an overview and summary of the chapters of this research report and the sections of the accompanying portfolio.

The next chapter builds upon this introduction and provides a detailed critical review of the published academic and commercial literature appertaining to the areas under investigation: the higher education approach; learner type and motivation; work-based higher education; determining value for employers and learners.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the necessary background and context for this study. The aim of this research is to explore the tensions experienced by a North East of England provider of the new degree apprenticeships, in order to make a positive impact on practice. This chapter considers the main areas of literature that can help to answer the research question: "What are the delivery tensions that an alternative degree apprenticeship provider experiences and how may they be overcome?"

2.2 Chapter overview

This chapter provides a critical review of extant literature that was undertaken from 2016 to 2019, a time when the Apprenticeship Levy and degree apprenticeships were still in their infancy. Inevitably this means that there was a scarcity of literature that covers learner and employer engagement with and experience of degree apprenticeships, the Levy, the implications and realities for HE providers delivering on degree apprenticeship programmes. As a result, and because it was not possible to undertake an historical appraisal of those specific aspects, this review explores what the researcher believes are the three most important areas (and in particular, areas of overlap,) relating to the employer, learner and provider stakeholders, that are likely to determine the place for and success of, degree apprenticeships on Tyneside:

The higher education evolution;
Determining value for employers and learners;
Work-based higher education.

(see also portfolio section 4.17)

Chapter 2.3: Universities and higher education – an evolution: This chapter begins by exploring what a university is and what it is for. It goes on to consider how this has evolved and how it may continue to change, and how this history influences present and future.   There is a critical review of market-led developments and their influence on higher education provision.

Chapter 2.4: The concept of 'value' within the context of education: Reviews what is meant by 'value', what it means to stakeholders: educators, students, employers and government. It goes on to critically examine how value might be measured and considers whether the education funder influences the expectations of the funder and the student.

Chapter 2.5: Higher education work-based learning and degree apprenticeships: Assesses educational policy developments and priorities, critically reviewing higher education work-based learning and the place for degree apprenticeships within the HE framework. It explores the adult learner characteristics against pedagogical developments and then identifies the challenges and opportunities for HE providers in providing degree apprenticeships.

2.3 Universities and higher education – an evolution

Universities play such an important part in so many of our lives, it is sometimes surprising that there is so much discussion and disagreement about what a university is (Barnett, 2010b; Barnett, 2012), what it is for and what it should be (Collini, 2012; Collini, 2018), what it should not be doing (Busch, Bowker, & Edwards, 2017; Giroux, 2014; Molesworth et al., 2010), even the very idea of the university itself (Newman, 1852/2016; Maskell & Robinson, 2002; Graham, 2008, Peters and Barnett, 2018)). Accordingly, it is difficult to find a clear definition of what a university is and what it does, with authors often, instead viewing through the post-structuralist lens of "you only know what something is

by what it is not" (Rushton, 2017) and telling us what a university is not and what it should not be doing.

Literature on the history of the western university often starts with the influences from the Ancient Greeks, the Sophists and then the philosopher Socrates and his most famous student Plato. It is from Plato's Academia that we derive some of the language we use today such as 'academy' and 'academic'; critical enquiry: The Platonic academy advocated scepticism, critical enquiry and the use of Socratic questioning (Foundation and Thinking, 2015); civic responsibility: The Platonic view of education was that it would make men nobler and in turn benefit the state (Plato, 380BCE/2014). Under the patronage of the pope and subsequently Kings, the first recognized western universities were established during the middle ages, replacing monasteries as the main place of learning for men of faith (Hartnell, 2018). At that time the world view was largely anthropocentric or homocentric (ibid), it was believed that the equilibrium of the universe was dependent on the wellbeing of a person; this provides some of the influence for the term "university". Newman (1852/2016) saw the metaphysical university as offering man transcendence, or ascent to a higher world, this elevation enabling one to see the world in a different way; giving some insight into the term 'higher education' (Barnett, p. 88, 2012).   We read that these universities were established as a place for open questioning and critical discourse (e.g. Barnett, 2012), however, we may question this against the reality of dogma and suppression by the church. For example, the biblical story of man warns against open learning as being a sin (a sin being disobedience (Grayling, 2017)) when consuming from the tree of knowledge; the church took radical steps to suppress science, for example regarding heliocentrism, when there was a challenge to the view presented in the Bible (ibid).

In this study a university is a metaphysical university that is a higher education institution that can award degrees, officially recognized by UK government, which may or may not follow the Humboltdian model combining research and

pedagogy. The term higher education is used in this study to mean, not a Newmanian spiritual transcendence, but an education at degree level that develops students as critical thinkers, delivered by a UK government Recognised or Listed body.

In the UK, centuries after the founding of the ancient universities, the 'civic' (Redbrick / Victorian) universities were established in the 1870s and 1880s in the cities that were borne from industrialisation such as Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield (Collini, 2012). These were established to support their local industries, they were not afraid to teach practical subjects alongside traditional curriculum, they featured live-at-home students and some students were women; they were local, practical and aspirational (ibid). In many ways over time however, increasingly these institutions reverted towards the ancient culturally dominant model, although they tended towards the Humboltdian research university model rather than the Newmanian metaphysical university model (Barnett, 2012). Their local and practical approach was changed in favour of a national one, industry rich curricula were replaced with a traditional hierarchy of subjects, and they found themselves compelled to install playing fields (Collini, 2012) and other grassed areas, which of course were to be admired as a show of wealth and social status, not walked upon (Harari, 2017).

In the 1960s and 1970s, both before and after the Robbins Report (1963), as a result of a governmental impetus (Collins, 2012), the plate-glass universities and the polytechnics were formed. These were intended to instruct in the practical skills of industry without betraying the 'general powers of the mind' (Robbins, 1963 p. 6). The literature often talks of 'mind growth' but there is difficulty in explaining what it means; it is clearly not the physical or neurologic mind-growth or 'Tourettoma' of Sacks (2011). It appears it cannot be measured, but it is an important part of a higher education.

The establishing of the polytechnics, which were formed and funded by government, resulted in the creation of a binary higher education system consisting of the heteronomous polytechnics and the autonomous universities.

In the 1990s the polytechnics became (the Post 1992) universities and many began losing their local, practical focus, including the phasing out of some of their part time courses, non-degree courses (such as the Edexcel higher diplomas) and some lost their strong employer links as a result of these changes (McGettigan, 2017b). Some authors viewed this as a reversion to a unary HE system (for example McGettigan, 2017b) whilst others (for example Maskell and Robinson, 2002) saw it instead as a ternary system, consisting of the 'old' universities, the Post 1992s and HE/FE Colleges (which often provide the higher diplomas formerly provided by the polytechnics and increasingly foundation and sometimes full undergraduate degrees). The idea of the university underwent a shift towards the entrepreneurial university (Barnett, 2012). To prepare students for the global knowledge economy and as part of the marketisation of HE, Tony Blair's government sought to further change the HE market by putting students in charge of paying for their studies. It was anticipated that this would result in a more 'market driven' higher education system, one funded by students, which was expected to drive up quality and qualification relevance, and drive down cost (McGettigan, 2013), however some argue that it did neither (McGettigan, 2017b).

The HE sector is again facing change to standardise higher quality and improve outcomes for students (McGettigan, 2017b). These changes include the opening up of TDAP to new and smaller alternative providers through the Office for Students, which is intended to help break the current anti-competitive arrangements from existing universities which exercise social and market closure to prevent new market entrants (DBIS, 2016c). The changes became law in the form of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. One of the most distinct reasons for these changes is to ensure that providers are

delivering courses that help students to become suitable for jobs that are available.

Through the Apprenticeship Levy, employers will be paying for degree apprenticeship delivery, albeit through hypothecated taxation. Having employers lead on degree apprenticeship standard developments and paying for the courses is a further step in neoliberal marketization, it may also involve employers in tertiary education in a way that goes beyond how they have previously been involved.

Some believe that involving the market (in the form of employers,) in education may appear to be something new, but it is not. Even in ancient Greece, contrasting with Plato's Academic view was that of the importance of education to the Market (sometimes referred to as the Agoran view) (Iñiguez de Onzoño). One of the greatest challenges of vocational HE is to ensure that the learning is equally relevant to support the 'mind' growth of the individual and the 'practicalities' of the market requirement. Busch (p. 22, 2017) argues that if providers of higher education concentrate on 'turning out scientists' to aid production, they are in danger of repeating a mistake made by the Soviet Union under a communist regime where student critical thinking was forbidden.

An increasingly market-led economy has resulted in greater competition between universities, which has led to widespread gaming (Busch, Bowker, & Edwards, 2017), however the market is highly segmented and as Foskett (p. 35, 2010) suggests, "Oxford and Derby are not trading in the same 'markets". The ancients were in a sense protected from competition due to their oligopolistic position (ibid), however they still competed with each other for patronage. US research uncovers the difference between universities that claim a collegiate approach and the realities of the lengths some go to in order to take each other's students (Kirp, 2004). Following the second world war and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, governments have increasing embraced markets and market-like competitions (Busch, Bowker, & Edwards, 2017), leading to the enacting of the entrepreneurial university (Barnett, 2012) and the

corporate university (ibid). These institutions adopted the military metaphors (e.g. vision, strategy, targets, mission, bullet points, plans) and market metaphors (e.g. customers, choice, customer satisfaction) (Barnett, 2012). Although many state that these are the metaphors and language of the corporates, which indeed they are, a look back to the ancient Greeks, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, reveals that they were military men and they used military metaphors when discussing philosophy and education. Consider, as an example, 'Academic Strategy', the word academic is ultimately derivative of Akademos, a legendary Athenian of the Trojan War tales (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.), strategy comes from strategos (army commander).

The marketisation brought with it increased measures and standardisation, which divides opinion. Advocates of the Bologna Agreement posit that it facilitates European-wide qualification standardization, supports credit transfer and European student mobilisation, ensuring qualifications have a parity of esteem. Critics (Busch, 2017; Collini, 2018; Giroux, 2012) argue that this standardisation leads to increased unitization, commodification and marketization. Collini (2018) and McGettigan (2013) blame the increase in measure on degree inflation. Providers require a form of measurement to ascertain their effectiveness, this may be performance indicators or another form of metric, with management theory suggesting that "what can't be measured, can't be managed", a quote often (inaccurately) referred to as a Druckerism (The Drucker Institute, 2013). Asking people to measure their own effectiveness can also be flawed as people don't know what the don't know (Dunning & Kruger, 1999). Collini (2018) repeatedly questions how higher education delivery and management can be measured, calling into question the credentials of those who undertake the measurement as well as the measure itself, further stating that imposing measures in fact decreases quality and referring to KPIs as "gobbledegook" (Ibid, p. 203). Other authors (for example Caulkin, 2018 p. 74) suggest that "what is measured is manipulated". Collini (2018) and Caplan (2018) suggest 'Campbell's Law' leads to a corruption of the very social processes being measured. Certainly a challenge facing providers

is to agree on the most appropriate measure(s) of their impact, whilst avoiding Measurement Myopia (The Drucker Institute, 2013).

Gibbs (2010) states that we as individuals are always becoming, that we never become, Barnett (p. 132, 2012) posits that this is the same for a university, it is never in a state of being, "it is always a becoming-university". This is not to suggest that that all universities should try to become the same, that would a fallacy of composition (Caplan, 2018). Barnett (2012) also asks whether a university can ever really imagine itself, it is capable of designing the vision of its own future? If it cannot, then new universities will need to be imagined by visionaries who do not come from within the university, in which case, will the new type of university actually be, a university?

We have looked at university evolution from ancient time, from the metaphysical university to the research university, to the entrepreneurial university, to the emerging corporate university. We have considered the university as a facilitator of learning and where knowledge is created or discovered, where mind growth and civic responsibility are as important as the learning. As demands have changed, so too have the institutions and as demands continue to change, so too the university must be reimagined. Just as universities become more and more like corporations (corporate universities), so too we must consider the place for the university corporate: the corporation as university.

The following chapter will look at how the value proposition fits within an educational framework.

2.4 The concept of 'value' within the context of education

Peters (2012) differentiates between 'truths' as being evidence-based and 'values' as being personal judgement calls. Some authors call into question the word 'value' itself, suggesting it is vague (Molesworth, Scullion, & Nixon, 2010) or even vacuous (Barnett, 2012).

There is much division in the literature as to what we mean by and how we might measure 'value' in the context of education, in particular in higher education. To establish a full picture, we need to consider what value might mean to the main stakeholders: academics, students (and sometimes their parents), employers, local and central government.

Those who are critical of the marketisation and consumerisation of education (Busch, Bowker, & Edwards, 2017) question whether it is possible to exchange money for value, or to exchange money for knowledge, asking whether one can ever truly buy knowledge. Barnett (p. 44, 2010a) suggests that the student must ultimately educate herself, "her learning is her learning", which calls into question what exactly is it that the student is paying for?

Socrates and Plato were forceful in their criticism of treating students as customers (Furedi, 2010), they anticipated that a commercialisation of education would lead to a pedagogy that was of limited intellectual value (ibid). Socrates was a philosopher and an educator of men, although he refused to be called a teacher and he didn't charge any money. Some say this was to distinguish himself from the Sophists (Mintz, 2013), however it also reinforces the Socratic argument that such an education cannot be bought.

There are those who uphold the Newmanian and Humboltdian beliefs that the university should serve society through a collegial approach, rather than serve the individual or enterprise, through a bureaucratic and externalistic approach. Indeed, much of the literature by academics is seeking to protect the worth of higher education and the reputation of the term 'university'. It is worth considering that the source of funding for the education may be a strong influencer on the perceptions of whom should benefit. Caplan (p. 124, 2018) argues that individuals spending their own resources are "looking out for number one", a selfish viewpoint, in contrast, when spending tax payer's money, they are looking to make the world a better place (Caplan, 2007). If Caplan is correct, then, apprentices may look differently on an employer's

investment and seek to support a benefit to their employer. In a market economy the investors expect a return on their investment, which is a shift from a social good to a private or individual good. There is also a shift from social knowledge to market knowledge (Buchbinder 1993, in Barnett, 2010a).

Literature on calculating the value of, or return on education, is predominantly written by either economists, academic protagonists or educational commentators. Wolf (2002; 2016) presents that, for the student, the return on education is the difference between the graduate's wage, and what they would be earning if they did not have that degree. Caplan (2018) also provides an economists view of how we measure the graduate ROI through the graduate's wage, whereas Collini (2018) posits that the value of the graduate's wage is related to the university they attend: the university's brand value – Cambridge refer to the University as a 'super brand', whilst simultaneously criticising the marketization of universities (Collini, 2012; Collini, 2018); which is where brand value comes from. Conversely Blackman (p.10, 2017) states that "most employers do not rank the university attended high amongst their selection criteria" except in the 'elite professions' and this is probably class bias (Ashley, Duberley, Sommerlad, & Scholarios, 2015). Research by US investigators Dale and Krueger (1999; 2011) find collegiate pedigree in the US to be almost worthless (Caplan, 2018).

Many authors say that making students pay for their education was expected to drive up quality and drive down cost, however, the Bennett Hypothesis (Gillen, 2012; Caplan, 2018) suggests student loans in fact increase demand and this inflates the price. Attempts by some British universities to undercut others have back-fired. Offers of no-frills pricing (University of Coventry) and psychological pricing (Derby University) both resulted in significantly fewer enrolments (McGettigan, 2013), possibly because the perceived 'worth' of the qualification is seen as being less, with the 2015 Nobel Prize winner Michael Spence (2015, in Caplan, p.14, 2018) stating that, in itself, a "costly investment in education as such signals high ability". The Nobel laurate Gary Becker

(2005, in Caplan, p.24, 2018) disagrees with the strength of signalling because hiring companies soon discover their new employee's productivity regardless of which university they attended and states that "Before long their pay corrects to their productivity rather than to their educational credentials." Caplan (2018) disagrees, stating that even when there is hirer's remorse, employers will often retain sub-par employees either because they are worried about legal consequences, the fraternal effects on other employees' morale, or just because they don't like firing people.

Determining the value or relevance of a degree is particularly challenging because most undergraduates study before entering the job market, and sometimes before they even know what job they want. Having said that, it is fair to assume that students have an expectation that their learning will lead to work; this is not something new either: Confucius (in the Analects) said it was hard to find a student willing to study for three years without obtaining a salaried position. In contrast, Collini (2012) reminds us that value is not just economic, but also intellectual, educational, scientific and cultural. Authors disagree when arguing whether students want more or less, when they pay. King (2005, in Caplan, p.26, 2018) states that "Higher education is the only product where the consumer tries to get as little out of it as possible", conversely Williams (2010) posits that students equate value-for-money with increased contact time; which may impact on the idea of 'independent learners' (ibid).

Press articles reporting how much more a UK graduate earns over a non-graduate vary greatly depending on the argument they are trying to make and whose statistics they are using, typically with lifetime pay differences ranging from £100,000 to £500,000 ("Reality Check: How much more do graduates get paid?", 2017; "Graduates earn more than non-graduates", 2018; "Graduates earn £500,000 more than non-graduates", 2015) and when they are criticising the cost of HE, they may even report occasions where graduates are paid less than their non-graduate counterparts ("The degrees where you earn less", 2016). There are influencing factors, some high paying jobs require HE

qualifications, some low level jobs do not, however it is difficult to gain a full picture of pay parity or disparity in an area where a degree is not a mandatory requirement, such as management. The CMI claims that a Chartered Manager adds an average value of £391,443 to a company (CMI, 2016) (the CMI application to become a Chartered Manager asks how much financial value the applicant has added to their employer(s), this cannot really be checked and it could be argued that the value was added before the applicant became a Chartered Manager).

In contrast, when considering vocational FE workplace courses, a study by Ullman (2005) of the actualised pay increase to learners who completed an NVQ showed that 59% received no pay increase (despite a higher percentage expecting one) and for those who did receive more pay, this averaged a weekly increase of £4.70.

Investors wishing to determine the value from their investment in learning is not new but it is usually difficult (Estrada & Connolly, 2015; Kinkaid and Gordick, 2003). Companies investing in training might use an extended version of the Kirkpatrick (2006) evaluation model to try to calculate a return on their investment, or they may create their own metrics. For example, Egon Zehnder studied what they call a Return on Leadership concept (EZI, 2011) which showed causation between the development of leaders and subsequent organic business growth, however it was a private study of 5,000 leaders and difficult for a researcher to verify or repeat.

For an employer to get the best return from their investment in work-based learning, they should follow a formalised plan, do, check, review process (Hardacre & Workman, 2010). They would begin by determining the company's training needs, perhaps with the guidance of a Training analyst (Peterson, 1992). HR Literature on the subject spanning the last five decades appears to centre on two training needs analysis (TNA) frameworks: an organisation-task-person (OTP) model; a performance analysis model. The OTP model (McGhee & Thayer, 1961) involves: an analysis of the organisation, such as key targets,

objectives, aims and resources required; focus on each task to discover how they are carried out, the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed; an analysis of the person who will undertake the training. A performance analysis approach (Bee & Bee, 1994) focusses on the difference between how a division is performing and how it is expected to perform, with training to reduce the performance gap. There have been attempts to integrate the models in order to address the limitations of each (for example, Taylor, Driscoll & Binning, 1998) and more recently the introduction of the GDOR model that centres on the economic impact of training (Huerta, Audet, & Sabata, 2012).

In a market economy the investors expect a return on their investment, a shift from a social good to a private or individual good. This also applies to governments as investors in higher education and in the last few decades' successive governments have repeatedly called for greater choice, relevance, value and return. At a macroeconomic level, if the country fails to grow outputs, this is seen as the fault of HE, with the Treasury as the funder not receiving the return they expect (McGettigan, 2013; 2017a; 2017b). At a regional level there is the expectation that HE will provide graduates that will start new enterprises, that there will be more people skilled to work in high-growth sectors and that the regional will prosper economically, again a lack of growth may be blamed on HE.

We have considered what 'value' might mean within education to different stakeholders across providers, students, employers and government. When considering the historical perspective, it may be argued that the 'investors' or patrons have always had expectations. The pope established universities to educate men of faith, the kings, to educate men to run the state, government to support commerce and prepare for state roles (Collini, 2018). To calculate a return on investment with any degree of accuracy means accounting for every cost and benefit, something that has proven difficult for an army of researchers who have been trying for decades (Caplan, 2018), with double-counting being the key pitfall (ibid).

It appears that the perception of where fees come from has a significant bearing on what stakeholders expect. Caplan (2007) finds that when publicly funded, voters expect a social good, whereas when students pay their own fees, Caplan (2018) finds they expect an individual good. The Apprenticeship Levy (DBIS, 2016) is a form of hypothecated taxation originating from employers, coming from an employer's account, whilst also being classed as public funding. This raises a question of whether stakeholders will expect a social, individual or commercial return.

The next will look at higher education work-based learning, consider the type of adult learner and the degree apprenticeship.

2.5 HE work-based learning and degree apprenticeships

The UK government's 2020 goals for business learning and development needs are set out in The Leitch Review of Skills (HM Treasury, 2005). The government set a target of 3 million quality apprenticeship starts between 2015 and 2020 (HM Government, 2015b). The ability to start 3 million apprentices on a quality programme is often questioned by the press, education and training sector representative bodies (e.g. UVAC, UUK, AoC and AELP), shadow cabinet politicians and academic authors (e.g. Way, 2016). These new apprenticeship standards (quality programmes) include the emerging degree apprenticeships.

Degree apprenticeships are a form of HE work-based learning (WBL) which represents a negotiated tripartite arrangement between the learner, the provider and the employer (Helyer & Garnett, 2016; UVAC, 2015). Helyer (2015a; 2015c) states work-based learning involves the learning of skills for the benefit of work, based around work. WBL has an important focus on learning rather than on teaching, which is why it is called work-based learning, not teaching (Boud & Symes, 2000, cited in Helyer, 2015a). Being a more

marketized version of education, the customer replaces the student and the teacher is replaced by a facilitator of learning (Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010). This new customer / facilitator relationship can be closer than the teacher / student one because whereas students are likely to have many lecturers, often WBL involves more time with fewer tutors. A criticism directed at WBL is that a closer relationship may make it harder for the tutor to fail the learner, indeed Ilott & Murphy (1998) present a whole chapter on this topic. Such a criticism could also be directed at collegiate universities, where close tutelage is provided.

Although the degree apprenticeship itself is new to England, the delivery of a practical degree including real work experience (for example in medical fields), is not. The medieval universities trained the physicians, who were encouraged to "slowly" accrue a diverse breadth of knowledge (Hartnell, 2018). There was a fractious diversity that is echoed today, with surgeons choosing the epithet Mr to demonstrate their professional origins of practice, rather than the academic title of Dr (ibid). The universities maintained a mix of academic (professors) and practical (surgeons) (ibid); these were easily distinguishable by their dress, the academics wearing robes. There appears to be an increasing interest in degree apprenticeships in other countries and there are clearly some thematic similarities between the UK and the US (Kirp, 2004; Mccarthy, Palmer, & Prebil, 2017), Australia (Parker, Dempster, & Warburton, 2018). Elsewhere in Europe there is evidence of the trialing of a dual programme in Germany (Deutsche Bundesbank, 2019), vocational degree pathway availability in Switzerland (Hoffman & Schwartz, 2015) and degree apprenticeship delivery in Greece. (Brinia, Stavropoulos, & Athanasoula-Reppa, 2018).

The degree qualification within a degree apprenticeship must have a parity of esteem (if not necessarily a parity of substance) with a traditional degree. The degree, whether part of an apprenticeship or standalone, must be mapped to the same QAA subject benchmarks. Wolf (2016) argues against this parity of

esteem, instead supporting a bifurcation of academic and vocational routes (quoted in Blackman, 2017). Wolf, author of the Wolf Review (2011) of vocational education, supports clear differentiation, a form of academic pluralism, to acknowledge the differences, value and strengths of traditional degrees and work-based degree apprenticeships.

In delivering degree apprenticeships, UK HEIs should consider alternatives to exams and essays (Villarroel, Boud, Bloxham, Bruna, & Bruna, 2019) and they must balance the pedagogic needs of their adult learners with the commercial needs of the employer, which may involve the creation of new types of pedagogy. Elton (2010) argues that academics do not consider university teaching and assessment to be researchable, they teach as they were taught, by people who taught as they were taught, going all the way back to the pedagogic model of the Middle Ages. Rushton (p. 16, 2014) explores this further, considering the difficulties trainee teachers face and that they feel they need to "play the game" adopting the norms and pedagogy of experienced teachers, which they did not anticipate nor prefer. Caplan (p.287, 2018) states that education is "as guilty as sin" but everyone is petrified to testify against it. If we accept that there are new demands, then so too must we consider new types of pedagogy (Barnett, 2012; Workman & Helyer, 2016). In recent decades there have however been a number of additional models on learning and instruction sometimes differentiating between pedagogy (literally, instruction of children), andragogy (instruction of adults (Knowles, 1973/2015)), heutagogy (self-learning (Parslow, 2010; Hase & Kenyon, 2001)), mystagogy (tertiary student learning (Parslow, 2006)) and synergogy (learners as instructors (Mouton & Blake, 1984)). When teaching children, a pedagogic model is more authoritative and might be viewed as being centered on the teacher or the place of learning, as opposed to work-based adult learning being 'customer' centred, a mixing of education and market norms, which inevitably creates tensions.

Malcolm Knowles first introduced the term andragogy in 1950 (Knowles, 1950), describing an andragogic approach of adult instruction, such an approach is taken in some HE WBL (Helyer, 2015a; UVAC, 2017) and in some FE delivery. Knowles (1973/2015) proposes that andragogy is based upon the following characteristics: adult learners are conscious that they need to learn; they have a concept of self; they come with experience; they have a readiness to learn; whereas child learners are subject oriented, adults have an orientation towards self, task or problem; adult learners come motivated by external factors (e.g. promotion prospects) or internal, with the most powerful motivator being desire. To avoid confusion, the term pedagogy will be used throughout this thesis, in relation to the instruction of adult learners. Knowles (2015) tells us that adult learners have a different set of motivators to those of younger learners, due to external motivators such as promotion, career change of salary increase, and internal motivation such as the desire for satisfaction or self-esteem. Tough (1983) suggests that all normal adults are motivated to keep growing and developing themselves, that if they do not, it is because they are blocked by barriers such as their ego, negative self-concept, lack of opportunity, time and/or funding, and they will not undertake learning if they feel the programmes violate the principles of adult learning.

Gawdat (2017) suggests that we are mere observers and so cannot see ourselves, that in trying to establish who we are not, we uncover the masks we wear in order to create an identity (ibid), that these masks represent the illusion of self, summed up in one word 'ego'. Once we start wearing these masks to reinforce our egos, we spend the rest of our lives playing roles: manager, parent, heartless, composed… (ibid). Each identity then becomes a role, which in turn must be reinforced. Peters (2012) provides an analogy that divides the individual into the chimp, human and computer, where the ego is manifested in the chimp.

To deliver degree apprenticeships nationally, HEIs need to overcome the geographical restrictions of their institutions. Foucault (1977) proposes that

many of the spatial metaphors and geographical metaphors we use are in fact juridico-political (e.g. *territory*), economico-juridical (e.g. *field*) or strategic notions. *Region* being a fiscal, administrative and military notion (ibid, p. 68). Marshall (2016) argues that we are prisoners of geography, that where we live shapes us as people, it shapes the power, the politics and the social development of the people. UK universities are predominantly established in urbanised areas, the areas that as a result of geographical boundaries, rivers and water inlets, grew to become spheres of economic influence (ibid). Crane (2017) reminds us that this positioning on waterways also made these areas prone to raids, such areas may be influenced by their history as well as geographics and by local geopolitics. Doel (2018) states the important distinction of place-based institutions between those that are 'of a place' as he suggests universities are, and those that are (or were) 'for a place', as he suggests, to a greater extent, the polytechnics were.

The debate regarding learning space is linked to how a student acquires knowledge, whether it is as an individual or socially (Paechter, 2001) as HEIs seek a parity of experience for students. Digital technologies are challenging the way universities use space (Duvivier, 2019) as they facilitate ways of communicating, collecting, storing and organising information, that too can support learning without the geographical restrictions. MOOCs broadcast lectures to all Internet users, whereas a century ago there were correspondence courses, then radio, then television (Busch, 2017). In reality, the take up of MOOCs has not lived up to expectations (Barnett, 2013; Caplan, 2018; Molesworth et al., 2010). Price (2016) states the case for including social media in an HE WBL course and for the VLE to be seen not necessarily as one platform but rather a selection of tools that collectively improve the pedagogical experience.

Barnett (2013) suggests that content can be made available for free via an 'open' university approach. Caplan (p.27, 2018) talks of a "guerrilla education" that is freely available and accessible but "almost no one takes advantage of

it", proving human capital purism is false "Universities don't card because they don't need to". Caplan (p.97,2018) suggests that the 'sheepskin effect' means people don't engage with the content, because they want the diploma more than the learning.

2.6 In summary

This chapter explores what it means to be a university and what a university is for. It considers change and evolution in HE and how this history might influence the present and future, followed by a look at marketisation and its effect on higher education provision. There was an exploration of what 'value' means in HE to the main stakeholders and there was a critical examination of how such value might be measured. The chapter included an assessment of educational policy developments and priorities, critically reviewing higher education work-based learning and the place for degree apprenticeships within the HE framework. It explored the adult learner characteristics against pedagogical developments and then identified some of the challenges and opportunities for HE providers in providing degree apprenticeships.

Key areas were uncovered that will inform the research activity. It is evident that HE is operating in a marketized economy. This is unlikely to change, institutions can accept this and, as they have done many times before, reimagine their future. There has always been a contrasting of views between the 'mind development' vs 'vocational' education, or the gaining of skills. With degree apprenticeship provision it might be better to accept this and ensure a pedagogy which includes both. There are different kinds of British universities, the number and diversity is increasing and is likely to continue to do so. Involving employers is likely to further the marketisation and need for measures. We should look at knowledge co-construction involving employer, apprentice and HE institution. Companies may even form their own universities, as Dyson are doing.

The next chapter describes the methodological approach that will be used in this research study in order to answer the research question.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter contextualized degree apprenticeship provision and the changes that have occurred in the HE landscape..

This chapter presents and describes the research methodology that was employed in order to answer the research question which is at the heart of this thesis, whilst being cognisant that the research seldom goes according to plan (Townsend & Saunders, 2018).

3.2 Chapter overview

The word 'research' is derived from French 'recherche' meaning to 'search' or to seek out. Trowler (2018) explains the importance of engaging with previous research in a doctoral study, whereas Bell & Waters (2014) remind us that the main objective is to determine or derive new information, rather than to search for what is already known.

- Chapter 3.3 details the aim and objectives of the research, the research questions and overall limitations and contextualisation of the research.

- Chapter 3.4 discusses the researcher's philosophical stance in relation to my overall ontological and epistemological slant and how my stance and beliefs might influence the study.

- Chapter 3.5 explores the nature of knowledge in practice based research and in particular in relation to the researcher's practice in both education and management consultancy.

- Chapter 3.6 describes the methodological approach and the choice of research methods that are to be used in this mixed methods study. This section also details the thematic analysis and case study research as methods that will be employed.

- Chapter 3.7 provides details of the population and sampling, reflexivity, ethics and researcher positionality. It then explores insider research and the issues that might arise from researching as an insider.

3.3 Aim and research questions

The author is seeking to answer the question:

> "What are the delivery tensions that an alternative degree apprenticeship provider experiences and how may they be overcome?"

This overarching question may be divided into the following research questions:

- RQ1: How does the learner (apprentice) experience compare with their expectation(s)?

- RQ2: What are the delivery tensions faced by staff delivering the CMDA and how can they be overcome?

- RQ3: What is the likely situation for a North East based alternative provider of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA)?

The aim of the research is to explore the tensions experienced by a North East provider of the new degree apprenticeships, in order to make a positive impact on practice.

This research into the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship focuses contextually on the University Centre Quayside (UCQ) – a market disruptor - delivering the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship in England. The research will focus on delivery in England, exploring responses from learners, employers, and strategic and operational staff from the provider.

The main purpose of the study is to support the intrinsic case study company, UCQ, to help them successfully deliver the degree apprenticeship standard.

The study is also expected to be of benefit to other providers through the development of a model that identifies and supports providers to overcome the difficulties associated with establishing and delivering a degree apprenticeship.

3.4 My philosophical stance, ontology and epistemology

Philosopher Brian Magee quoted in Syed (2016, p. 295) states '*The truth is to be kept inviolate and handed on unsullied from generation to generation. For this purpose, institutions develop – mysteries, priesthoods, and at an advanced stage, schools.*' Such schools would not allow for new ideas and would expel anyone who disagreed with the doctrine (Coyle, 2010). At some point however this was to change. Criticism started to be tolerated and even encouraged (Syed, 2016). According to philosopher Karl Popper (Popper, 2011), this was started by the Ancient Greeks. The change was to end the dogmatic tradition. It was, Popper (2011) says, '*the most important moment in intellectual progress since the discovery of language'* (Syed, 2016, p. 295).

Building on the wisdom of Socrates and others, Plato argued that 'reality is known only through the mind', *knowledge a priori* (Kreis, 2009) whereas Aristotle, Plato's student and possibly his fiercest critic, believed in the Empirical stance and in knowledge *a posteriori* (comes after experience).

So from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle we have criticality via the two ontological stances: Empiricist and Interpretivist, relating to rule-bound or created (respectively), often depicted on a research continuum. A research project is conducted against the ontology of the paradigms (Denscombe, 2014).

Academic authors often refer to empiricism as being objective and interpretivism as subjective (for example Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) whereas Deetz (1996) argues the bias of these terms as originating from the dominant (Empiricists), relating more to a researcher's justification for their decision rather than a useful description. On the research continuum, the positivist applies a natural science model, believing that the subject has fixed

properties that can be studied objectively and that will exhibit the same results each time, often favouring quantitative methods. In contrast, the interpretivist challenges whether the researcher can ever be objective and sees social reality as being constructed by people, typically favouring qualitative data collection methods.

The philosophical stance reflects the researcher's ontological view and epistemological stance and it impacts the choice of research methods. Whilst the researcher's espoused beliefs will not change, the methods employed must be appropriate to answer the research question. Whilst my ontological beliefs may be fixed, reflection shows me that my epistemological stance has changed. As a teenager my studies started in the sciences and as a student and then a practitioner of natural science (physics, chemistry, mathematics, then computer science), I favoured neopositivistic (Deetz, 1996) approaches to research. Presently, as a social sciences practitioner, I find myself holding greater value in qualitative studies. I believe in knowledge a priori and a posteriori; that both are equally valid and that the coexist. In keeping with my professional practice and my personal beliefs, for this research I will be taking an interpretivist and constructivist stance with a focus on establishing rich insights from a smaller and more in-depth study. I believe that people usually behave in a particular way due to the circumstances and influences at that time. I have cross-checked this stance using the HARP questionnaire (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). So for me, using a mixed methods approach, which is an appropriate way to answer the research question, is valid.

3.5 The nature of knowledge in practice-based research

Plato accords that knowledge is formed as a subset at the intersection of truth and belief (Plato, 2014 [380 BC]), as such knowledge is sometimes called 'true belief'.

In discussion on types of knowledge production Fulton (Kuit, & Sanders, 2013) discuss Mode-1 and Mode-2 knowledge in relation to research and professional

practice. Gibbons (Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, & Scott, 1994) proposes Mode-1 knowledge is contextualised by the idea of academic knowledge, which may be set out in peer reviewed and scrutinised journals (Barnett, 2000). Mode-2 knowledge is characterised by the practical application, a matter of knowledge-in-use but is not knowledge applied to practice but rather knowledge that is derived in and through practice (Dedos, 2010); in essence this is a shift from pure to applied research. Barnett (2000) discusses Mode 3 knowledge (introduced by Carayannis (& Campbell, 2012)) as knowing-in-and-with-uncertainty (Dedos, 2010 p.36) where each knowledge element results in further uncertainty and a further epistemological gap (ibid). Eraut (1994) analyses the different types of knowledge that practising professionals use and the acquisition of that knowledge through a combination of experience, from other people and from texts.

The researcher believes in the validity of Mode 1, Mode 2 and Mode 3 knowledge, however, in my professional practices (see portfolio section 4, 4.4, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20) of management intervention and work-based learning, Mode-2 knowledge can have a greater relevance over Mode-1, where the requirement is to put into practice the knowledge (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) and to derive knowledge from that practical application (Gibbon, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, & Scott, 1994), typically supporting the transition of an organisation from one state to another (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011). It is less theoretical, more applied and perceived as of greater importance because of the practical applicability. Acceptance and promotion of the validity of Mode 2 knowledge (by Fulton (Kuit, & Sanders, (2013); Gibbons (Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, & Scott, 1994); Lee (2009)) is for me very relevant, refreshing and empowering. In discussion about students (not professional doctorate students) Barnett (2004) argues that they use Mode 1 knowledge and sometimes Mode 2, but that Mode 3 knowledge is the one that is of real value to them. Barnett's proposition is supported by research evidence that suggests that students are encouraged to demonstrate performance rather than learning (Cassidy & Eachus, cited in Dedos, 2010), whereas professional doctorate

product evidence often involves hybrid forms of knowledge (Scott, Brown, Lunt, & Thorne, 2004).

3.6 Methodological approach

This research framework has been developed following Saunders' (& Tosey, 2012) metaphor of the research onion. The research onion presents a visualisation of each of the research stages that the researcher must go through when conducting a research study. From the outside in, each onion layer represents a more detailed research stage, from the overarching philosophy through to the data collection and analysis. Using the onion metaphor when designing the research methodology, helps the researcher to ensure that each stage has been considered. The onion is an easily adaptable framework that Bryman (2012) suggest can prove beneficial in many different contexts.

The research questions call for both qualitative and quantitative data collection, and so, in considering the most effective methods, the researcher has decided to use a convergent, multi sequential mixed method approach (Denscombe, 2014), with qualitative research taking the position of privilege. Cormack (2006) proposes that a mixed methods approach can overcome the limitations of singular qualitative and quantitative methods, and that by triangulating, a more complete understanding of phenomena may be obtained; triangulation being where two or more research methods are used. Saunders (Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) suggest the two main advantages of following a triangulated mixed method approach are that, depending on the purpose, different methods may be deployed and that convergent evidence may be obtained through triangulation, which adds to the richness of the data.

For the quantitative data collection, the researcher will be using an inductive (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) research approach, establishing conclusions based on the individual case, by collecting data from a larger sample of staff, employers and learners.

The qualitative data collection follows an interpretivist research philosophy (Bryman, 2012; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) where the focus is to gather rich insights into subjective areas, typically involving a deeper but smaller investigation. The researcher believes that the responses an individual gives may change depending on the circumstances at the time and so are subjective. When researchers are looking to understand an individual's perceptions they are seeking to gain rich insight as opposed to statistical or empirical data (Bell & Waters, 2014, p.7), so a qualitative approach is better suited.

Mintzberg (1973) is a proponent of quantitative methods arguing the reliability and validity over qualitative studies being subject to interviewer bias. Conversely, advocates of qualitative studies such as Braun & Clarke (2013) and Stake (2010) question whether quantitative studies are subject to uncontrolled bias and naïve application. Cormack (2006) suggests that a mixed methods approach (Denscombe, 2014) can overcome the limitations of mono quantitative and qualitative studies, and some authors argue that both of the extreme paradigms may be flawed (e.g. Hunt, 2005). Deetz (1996) argues that few researchers now claim to be positivists leaving most practising neo-positivism instead.

Hempel (& Oppenheim, 1948) state that the explanations generated by the physicists can also be applied to the social sciences, that the argument of unrepeatability of any events involving humans, making them inaccessible to causal explanations, may similarly apply to the physical sciences. Whereas rule-bound, numerical data driven quantitative research may be favoured in some sectors (such as medical), qualitative research is favoured in my profession as a better way to understand the social world and human nature.

There are a variety of strategies that can be used in qualitative research (Denscombe, 2014; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015; Stake, 2010). The principal strategies are: case study research, Grounded Theory, narrative

research, ethnography, and action research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015).

A muticase study involves comparative analysis between cases and often a tension occurs between the case and the quintain, where both call for attention; Stake, (2005, p.7) calls this the "case-quintain dilemma". A single-case study concentrates on a single case, where the prime focus is on the case, not the methods by which the case operates (Yin, 1994). Stake (2005) proposes that even in a muticase study project, an individual researcher may concentrate on a single case as if it was the only one. Yin (2018, p. 53) proposes that single-case studies are a common design and that it is "eminently justifiable … where the case represents (a) a critical test of existing theory, (b) an extreme or unusual circumstance, or (c) a common case, or where the case serves a (d) revelatory or (e) longitudinal purpose." This case study exploration of the CMDA degree apprenticeship is such a revelatory case. Trowler (2016) suggests there are practical benefits for doing a single-site case study and that for a doctoral researcher, a multi-site study is usually too ambitious.

In summary, the researcher will be using mixed methods as an overarching methodological approach with clustered foci on UCQ and the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship.

3.6.1 Methods

Using mixed methods has gained in popularity since the 1980s. It usually requires additional resources, typically taking longer to collect and analyse the data (McKim, 2017). Mixed methods can be used for triangulation and cross checking of results, leading to a deeper understanding of phenomena (ibid). As an approach to learning, it provides the student with experience of different research instruments and a familiarization with both qualitative and quantitative approaches.
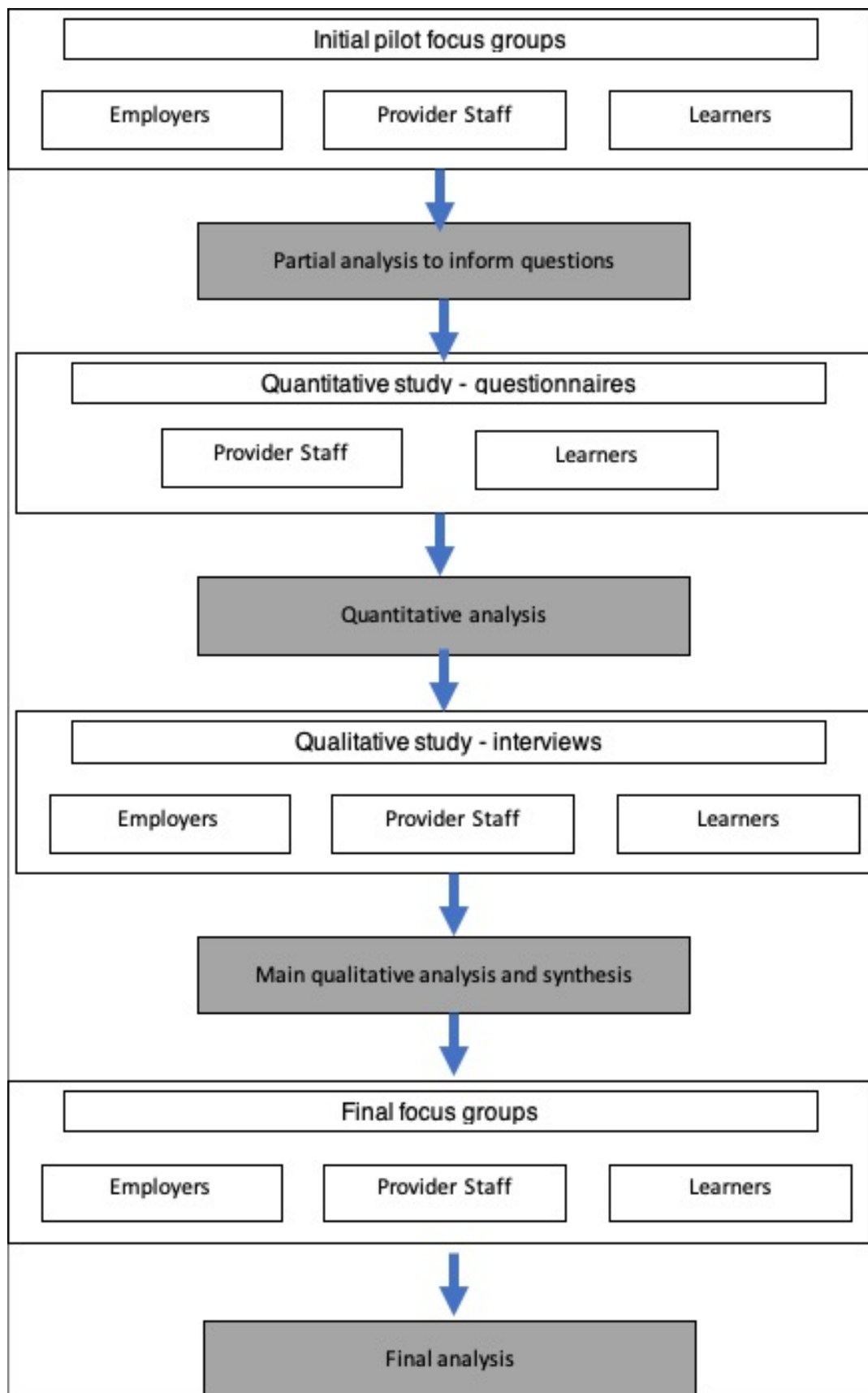
Figure 3.1 The convergent multi sequential mixed methods approach

This research will start with considering secondary research data from the CMI, DfE, UUK, UVAC, ESFA and the North East Learning Providers network and Higher & Degree Apprenticeship specialist group. The multi sequential mixed methods approach can be seen in figure 3.1. The primary research will begin with initial pilot focus groups involving learners and UCQ staff to start to identify themes to investigate and likely survey questions. There will be two Likert style questionnaires, one aimed at a cross section of UCQ CMDA existing degree apprentices, the second at UCQ CMDA staff. This will help to identify possible interview participants for the next stage in which a qualitative study will be undertaken via semi-structured interviews with learners (degree apprentices), employers and provider staff. The responses will be transcribed into nVivo for thematic analysis.

This mixed method research will use a quantitative questionnaire using Office365 Forms, targeted at both strategic and operational staff from UCQ. The questionnaire will gather information regarding provider readiness using a Likert scale (Bryman, 2012); the researcher will be aiming to gather 15 cross-sectional (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) responses. This questionnaire will enable participants to make a quick response without the likelihood of interviewer bias (Bryman, 2012), however, any possibility of ambiguity must be avoided as the researcher will not be present to explain the questions or their context. A scale of 1 to 6 will be used, eliminating a middle choice in an attempt to persuade respondents to choose a stance.

The qualitative study will be undertaken via semi-structured interviews with degree apprenticeship delivery staff, learners and employers. The researcher was intending to carry out only face to face interviews making phone recordings for transcription. UCQ staff and employers are however IT savvy, increasingly using video conferencing systems including Skype, Skype for Business and GoTo Meeting for CMDA programme activities and periodic reviews, and employers have pushed for this for the interviews in order to save time. Undertaking interviews this way is more flexible to fit in with participants and

means the interviews can be recorded both in the application and by phone for backup. The technology is reliant on bandwidth at both ends and can have interference, it also makes it difficult to study participant body language. Where the interviewees choose not to be recorded, the researcher will take notes.

A final set of focus groups will seek to capture or clarify any remaining points.

3.6.2 Data analysis

Thematic analysis involves the investigation of data and then coding against known (a priori) and/or emerging (a posteriori) themes. It fits with the researcher's epistemological stance, interpretivist and social-constructivist, whereas a qualitative content analysis using exclusive codes is more positivistic. Unlike the inductive approach in grounded theory, thematic analysis may involve both deductive and inductive approaches (Braun and Clarke, 2013), such as in this study where themes were deduced from the study of extant literature and induced from the analysis of collected data. Whilst thematic analysis is widely practiced, there is a lack of agreement on exactly how it should be approached (Judger, 2016).

The researcher will first undertake dialogic research and transcribe the interviews for narrative and thematic analysis in NVivo software to establish emergent themes. These results will inform the second stage of research which will be a quantitative study amongst other degree apprenticeship providers, for comparative analysis. The Likert style questionnaires will be analysed in Excel rather than SPSS. The researcher is very familiar with Excel and believes that Excel lends itself to better visual analysis, and whilst SPSS is more sophisticated, using Excel has been show to increase conceptual and computational knowledge (Proctor, 2002). The results will be used to help finalise the interview questions and for determining a sample for possible interviewees and focus group participants.

Thematic narrative analysis is used to identify analytical themes within narratives (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015, p. 601), focusing on content (what is being said) rather than structure (how the content is constructed). There will also be a comparative analysis taking account of an earlier pre-Levy study from 2016 (Mapletoft, 2017), which looked at potential learner and employer perceptions prior to the Levy introduction.

The main body of research will take place over five months from September 2018 to January 2019.

The study involves a small sample of staff from, and learners and employer clients of, UCQ. Whilst the study considers a single degree apprenticeship programme in a single provider, it will provide an illuminative assessment of findings amongst a market disrupting alternative provider of HE.

The data will be anonymized for confidentiality and stored securely during the study and then securely destroyed following the investigation.

3.7 Population and sampling

A researcher is likely to start by defining the overall research population (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) and then a target population. Kervin (1999) suggests that the target population is a more accurate representation of the research inquiry.

Conducting a census (of an entire population) is usually outside the financial resources and time constraints of the research (Cassell, Cunliffe, & Grandy, 2017) and several authors (for example Barnett, 2002; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015) suggest that sampling can give greater accuracy than a census and that a representative sample may provide more useful results. This study will involve a representative (non-probability), purposive sample because the

sample are known to the researcher, they are accessible, relative, relevant and accurate. The researcher will be using a homogenous sampling technique where the participants have similar characteristics with limited variation. The relevance is to illuminate depth within key themes.

The intention is to continue the research until a theoretical saturation point is reached, however, it is prudent to estimate the likely number of participants prior to starting the study, to plan in the research resources and to ensure there is a plan to attract the likely number of research participants, and also to ensure that there is not have too much data to analyse (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Saunders & Townsend, 2018). Saunders & Townsend (2018 p. 490) state the difficulty in finding authors who offer empirical evidence to suggest the number of interviews needed to reach saturation point; indeed, they could find not a single author within business and management. Instead they consider some of the most widely cited studies and conclude that somewhere between 12 and 30 interview participants should be necessary. Saunders (2012) suggests for planning amongst a single group, between four and twelve participants. Saunders & Townsend (2018) suggest as a broad generalisation, between 15 and 60 interview participants and that analysing 30 participants overall is likely credible.

For the qualitative research phase my study clusters around the intrinsic case: UCQ. The participants are from three separate groups and the target populations are as follows: staff - 20; learners - 30; and employers 12, endeavoring to involve six participants from each group; 18 overall. Engaging six employers in interviews may not be possible, especially engaging the smaller employers (Curran & Blackburn, 2001), the study will however need a minimum of four (Saunders, 2012).

3.7.1 Reflection and reflexivity

Qualitative researchers involved in social science research may be subject to criticism from supporters of quantitative methods for not being objective

(Watson, 2014). In response they are likely to propose a view through a critically reflective lens (ibid). Nelson (2000 in Wang, Koh, & Song, 2015) suggests the narrative process enables the narrator to take an external viewpoint on his experience. Jesus was brilliant at using narrative to help others to understand and learn. Blanchard (& Hodges, 2016) tell us that some leaders see leading like Jesus as being "soft" or impractical. I think that this view is incorrect and is far removed from for example the Jesus we read about in Killing Jesus (O'Reilley & Dugard, 2013).

Meaning making makes us better at understanding and learning, it is at the heart of Transformational Learning Theory originally developed by Jack Mezirow. Where often emphasis is often placed on answering who, what, where, when and how (past, present and future), Meaning making helps us to answer the "Why?" Through reflection I can see that my practiced norms and values have changed but not dramatically. I question what I do professionally to see if it sits with my personal and vice versa. Reflective practice helps one to become aware of dissonance, so that one can look to establish congruence.

The adoption of critical reflective practice differs between sectors / professions and the seniority of the person involved. For example, Syed (2016) explains that the aviation sector learns from failure whereas the health service (often without explicit intent) hides it. Then there is cognitive dissonance: the more superior the person, the more likely they are to hide failure. Surgeons are often so keen to protect their self-esteem that they can't admit their fallibility. "Self-esteem, in short, is a vastly overvalued psychological trait. It can cause us to jeopardise learning if we think it might risk us looking anything less than perfect. What we really need is resilience: the capacity to face up to failure, and to learn from it. Ultimately, that is what growth is all about." (Syed, 2016 p.292).

Early work on reflective thinking includes the seminal work of Dewey (2011 [1933]), which discusses the difficulty in suspending assumption and acceptance of established norms, to question or disregard assumptions and to

suspend judgment during inquiry. Schön (1984) (who wrote his PhD thesis on Dewey) introduced the idea of single and double loop learning. He claimed to have derived the notions of reflecting-on-action and reflection-in-action, from the works of Dewey (2011 [1933]). He wrote about the reflective practitioner and puts forward his view or how professionals really go about solving problems, by telling us how they think in action. Whereas single loop-learning focuses on actions taken and resultant outcomes, double-loop learning delves further to look at the thinking behind the actions taken.

Gilroy (1993, quoted in Newman, 1999, p. 154) argues Schön's epistemology can lead to 'the abyss of an infinite regress', where 'the knowledge produced by reflection can only be recognised by further reflection, which in turn requires reflection to recognise it as knowledge, and so on.' (ibid). These methods are important in my practice, they help a practitioner to understand not just what has happened, but why it happened. What typically begins as reflecting-on-action looks back at critical incidents that have occurred, helping the practitioner to establish meaning and to learn from the incident. The next step involves reflection-in-action which is about making sense of what is happening as it happens (Bolton, 2014). Brown (1995) argues that teachers reflecting on their work is teaching's holy grail. Helyer (2015b) and Helyer & Price (2016) presents a compelling argument on the importance of reflection in work-based learning. This importance is reflected in the new apprenticeship standards and both professional and reflective practice are important elements in UCQ's Professional Management degree and feature in the CMDA standard (HM Government 2015).

A professional doctorate study often sees the researcher as an insider, working within the area of study, sometimes working with the research participants.

3.7.2 Insider research

Merton (1972) refutes both: the argument that only insiders have the depth of knowledge, understanding and access to undertake 'proper' research; and the argument that outsiders are the only ones with the objectivity and detachedness to undertake research reliably. Instead he argues that we are never truly only an insider or an outsider.   Titchen (& Hobson, 2011) on the other hand, suggest that a researcher must choose their position and be either an insider or an outsider.   Trowler (2016) suggests that whichever position is taken, it is important to be explicit about the chosen position and to understand the issues the position may illuminate and those that may be obscured.

Gaarder (1998) in 'Through a glass darkly' – says that "We see everything in a glass, darkly". Rather like looking in a shop window, when what is in front of us is dark, we see ourselves and that which is behind us. When what is in front of us is clear (the glass polished, the shop lit), we see much more of what is in front, but no longer the reflection of ourselves or what is behind us. By coming a UCQ student, as described above, this changes the researcher's power positioning, in addition, it applies to the illumination of certain aspects of this research and the consequence that other areas will become obscured.

Work-based learning is learning (not teaching) that is based around work and is of benefit to the employer (Helyer 2015a; Helyer 2015c). By the very nature of work-based learning, the researcher is an insider, working on organisational or related issues, from within (Costley, Elliott, & Gibbs, 2010). This often means that colleagues may become research subjects, and that the organisation has a vested interest in the research results; these aspects must be carefully managed. There is the possibility that colleagues, or members of the shared community of practice (or subjects who otherwise share biographical aspects with the researcher), will feel obliged to participate (ibid)

When an 'insider' researcher shares biographical aspects with those being researched it may be argued that the researcher is able to draw on their position

in order to exact participation access (Brooks, Te Riele, & Maguire, 2014). The greater the intimacy between them, the greater the chance for exploitation (Denscombe, 2014). However, sharing biographical details can aid access and some researchers will employ the support of another researcher who has a similar biography to the researchee for this purpose (Brooks, Te Riele, & Maguire, 2014).

Depending on the study outcomes, the researcher acknowledges that the UCQ may be disappointed in the research results. The researcher will maintain a neutral and unbiased position even if the research results don't say what UCQ would wish to hear. There will be no modification to or suppression of findings to UCQ and the researcher has not entered into an agreement to prohibit possible publication of findings (Brooks, Te Riele, & Maguire, 2014). The researcher shall keep UCQ updated as the study progresses and make it clear that it would be unethical to badger or coerce study engagement, or to make any attempt to skew the results.

3.7.3   Ethics, power and positionality as an insider researcher

In research, ethics "refer to the standards of behaviour that guide your conduct in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work, or are affected by it." (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015 p.726).

A researcher must consider all the ethical aspects relating to their research project (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015), ensuring the voluntary co-operation and consent of participants, but also taking account of reliability, validity and bias. A useful way to do this is to sub-divide the research into stages and consider the ethical issues of each stage and how they will be addressed (Denscombe, 2012). This includes understanding what we mean by knowledge and how our individual (personal) beliefs, values and experience can shape our understanding of the world. Ethical approaches are likely to differ across sectors, for example Husted (& Husted, 2008) describe a

symphonological approach within nursing and health care, where a tacit social (and perhaps psychological) contract exists between the parties and where the approach taken is based on agreement by the practitioner and the patient. An understanding of the different approaches in different sectors may provide a useful influence for my own practice within business, management and education, within which there are detailed guidelines and frameworks within which to operate (Brooks, Te Riele, & Maguire, 2014; Coe, 2017; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

The researcher was granted permission to undertake this study by the Sunderland University Ethics Committee, following the BERA (2011) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (Brooks, Te Riele, & Maguire, 2014). The researcher has taken full account of the participants and the researcher (Denscombe, 2014) at each stage of the research from topic formation, through the design, data collection, processing and analysis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). Full account has been taken of the researcher's own positionality and the influence this might have as a researcher, which warrants special consideration in practice-based research (Fulton & Costley, 2019).

Researcher positionality refers to the researcher's views and beliefs (ontology, epistemology and beliefs about human nature (Opie & Sikes, 2004)) coupled with the positional stance they take in relation to a research element (Foote & Bartell, 2011). Griffiths (1998) states that bias comes not from having ethical and political positions, but from not acknowledging them. Acknowledging my potential bias, together with understanding the role of power (Brooks, Te Riele, & Maguire, 2014) and of knowledge creation, will help me to respond critically and sensitively to the research (Griffiths, 1998).

Kogan (2005) examines the patterns of power in relation to modes of knowledge. In discussion on the relationship(s) between knowledge and power, Kogan (2005, pp. 10-11) states that, although it is often said that 'knowledge is power' (Foucault, 1995 [1977]), it can also be disempowering, for

example when social science academics take a critical stance and withdraw from policy involvement. Indeed, this is a stance that the researcher took by adopting an ethnographical involvement as a student on UCQ's CMDA programme. Being such an insider participant gives certain advantages, to gain knowledge and experience of the programme as a student, enabling a consideration of micro, meso and macro analysis. Conversely, however it is also disempowering for a person of significant control within UCQ, who can no longer be involved in CMDA policy decisions. The more embedded the researcher become as a UCQ student, the less institutional power he had within UCQ, and hence the more he become like every other UCQ student.

Isaac (1992, p.56) tells us that "The concept of power is at the heart of political enquiry", that etymologically the word 'power' means 'to be able', and that it is generally associated with domination, in relation to mastery or control.

There are four main models of power suggested by Isaac (1992, p.56):

1. A voluntarist model, as described by Dahl (in Kogan, 2005, p.11) as "a capacity to get others to do what they otherwise would not do…"

2. A hermeneutical or communicative model, where there is power in the shared meaning of social communities (Kogan, 2005, p.11), imagined realities (Harari, 2015) or neosubjective social constructions (Harari, 2017). This relates to the way academic power is exercised (Kogan, 2005) through Model 1 peer reviewed knowledge, excluding those without the specialist knowledge. Bourdieu (1975) backs this perspective and discusses the power of shared meaning and use of knowledge based esoteric and exclusive language.

3. A structuralist model, rooted in Marxism and Darwinism (Kogan, 2005) where power is vested in those who control knowledge formation and use (ibid).

4. A post-modernist model from Foucault (1995, [1977]) and feminist writing in which language and symbols are central to power (Kogan, 2005).

The researcher is conscious of the possible different power positions and models at play, for example the learners (UCQ students) could feel obligated to participate in the research if they view the researcher as the Principal of UCQ rather than as a researcher. In an attempt to shift the power to the subjects, the researcher will ask permission to include them in research, give them every opportunity to say no (via their tutor) and undertake all research on their premises rather than at UCQ. The researcher will share with them the view that together as researcher and respondents, they are creating knowledge.

Obtaining informed consent is a central element of an ethical approach to research (Crow, Wiles, Heath, & Charles, 2006). To ensure all consent is informed (Gray, 2018), each potential participant will be given a Participant Information Form which provides details of the study, contact details of the Director of Studies for further enquiry, details about anonymization of responses and clarification that the participant can choose to withdraw at any time.

Another difficulty anticipated as a possible risk to the study, is working with small employers, not because of power play, rather because they are notoriously difficult to engage in research (Curran & Blackburn, 2001); indeed, it was difficult to engage employers in my previous pilot research. My plan is to keep the intrinsic case study company informed through regular updates.

The researcher must be careful that their existing views do not bias the research or the analysis of the results (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). The researcher will adopt a reflexive stance to understand potential researcher

influence in action (Bolton, 2014) to in order to minimize the effect of any unknown bias.

This illuminative study focuses on gaining deep trustworthy and authentic insights into a subjective area from a smaller more in-depth investigation, rather than providing generalizable and repeatable results.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has illuminated the area of focus, the researcher's epistemological beliefs as an interpretivist and the mixed methods that are to be used adopting a deductive process. The methodological approach is determined and justified as is the selection of research instruments covering quantitative questionnaires, qualitative interviews and focus groups. The chapter proceeds to discuss reflection and reflexivity, researching as an insider, the ethical, power and positionality aspects that can influence the study.

The next chapter is a presentation of the quantitative research findings.

4 Quantitative Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the underpinning research methodology to be undertaken for this study, following a mixed methods approach. This chapter presents the results of the learner and provider surveys. These findings then influenced the finalization of questions for the qualitative phases, the learner, provider and employer interviews, which then influenced for final questions to be answered by the focus groups.

4.2 Findings of the learner survey

The learner survey was conducted amongst fourteen responders consisting of participants on their second year of the UCQ Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, from an overall population of 30. Responders were approached by their Professional Development Assessor and asked if they wished to volunteer to complete the survey.

Learners were asked to rate the importance of statements made in Part C of the questionnaire.

A Likert scale of six was used as follows:
1 is very unimportant
2 is moderately unimportant
3 is slightly unimportant
4 is slightly important
5 is moderately important
6 is very important

Table 4.1 shows the percentage of learner responses in terms of their deemed importance according to the Likert scale.

	Part C questions	very unimportant	moderately unimportant	slightly unimportant	slightly important	moderately important	very important	disagree total	agree total
C1	How important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding your programme?	0	0	0	0	21	71	0	93
C2	How important is that your employer is investing in you and your programme of learning?	0	0	0	0	21	79	0	100
C3	How important is it that your programme is periodically reviewed and actions taken to make modifications?	0	0	0	14	21	64	0	100
C4	How important is it that your choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to your organisational needs?	0	0	0	14	21	57	0	93
C5	How important is it that your choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to your personal development needs?	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	100
C6	How important is it that your participation on the CMDA achieves a financial return for your employer?	14	7	7	29	36	7	29	71
C7	How important is it that your participation on the CMDA achieves a financial return for you personally?	14	7	7	50	14	7	29	71
C8	How important is it that training evaluation is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme?	0	7	0	7	50	36	7	93
C9	How important is it that your provider is a private university centre?	7	14	21	21	21	14	43	57
C10	How important is it that your provider understands your industry?	0	0	7	14	36	43	7	93
C11	How important is it the choice of delivery location to you?	0	0	7	21	29	43	7	93
C12	How important is achieving the qualifications?	0	0	0	7	21	71	0	100
C13	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which takes account of work you do in your job?	0	0	0	7	29	64	0	100
C14	How important is it that assignments and activities are based around your real work?	0	0	0	7	14	79	0	100
C15	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which is assessed and not exam based?	0	0	0	7	21	71	0	100
C16	How important is it that you attend a local institution?	7	21	7	7	29	29	36	64

Part C responses (%)

Table 4.1 Summary of learner survey responses according to the Likert scale.

Considering the learner survey responses (in Table 4.1), 100% of learners agreed that it was important that their employer was investing in them and their programme of learning, with 79% selecting that it was very important. 100% said it was important that their programme is reviewed periodically and actions taken to make modifications, however 14% felt that was only slightly important. 100% agreed that it was important that their choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to their own personal needs, with a 50/50 split between moderately important and very important, whereas 93% felt it was important that their being on the CMDA be aligned to their organisational needs, 14% of those felt it was only slightly important. 100% felt that achieving the qualifications was important, 7% selecting that it was only slightly important whereas it was very important to 71%. All responders selected that it was important that the programme takes account of work done in their job, that assessment be based around activities and real work, with 79% saying that was very important, and that the programme be assessed rather than examined.

It was viewed as important that the Apprenticeship Levy was paying for their programme, 71% selecting very important.

93% agreed that the programme effectiveness should be subject to evaluation and 93% agreed that the choice of delivery location was important, however only 43 said it was very important. 93% felt it was important that their provider understood their industry, 7% felt it was unimportant whereas 43% thought it was very important. 71% felt their participation on the CMDA should achieve a financial return for them personally and 71% felt it was important that their employer sees a financial return from their involvement. Further examination of the data reveals that half of the respondents selected that it was equally important that there be a return for their employer and themselves, and that on balance, it was more important that their employer see a return than them personally.

Only 64% said it was important that they attend a local institution and of those, only 29% said it was very important. 43% said it was not important that they attended a private university centre and only 14% felt it was very important.

Table 4.2 depicts the mean and standard deviation across the learner importance statements according to the Likert scale.

		Mean	Standard deviation
C1	How important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding your programme?	5.77	0.42
C2	How important is that your employer is investing in you and your programme of learning?	5.79	0.41
C3	How important is it that your programme is periodically reviewed and actions taken to make modifications?	5.50	0.73
C4	How important is it that your choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to your organisational needs?	5.46	0.75
C5	How important is it that your choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to your personal development needs?	5.50	0.50
C6	How important is it that your participation on the CMDA achieves a financial return for your employer?	3.86	1.51
C7	How important is it that your participation on the CMDA achieves a financial return for you personally?	3.64	1.39
C8	How important is it that training evaluation is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme?	5.07	1.03
C9	How important is it that your provider is a private university centre?	3.79	1.47
C10	How important is it that your provider understands your industry?	5.14	0.91
C11	How important is it the choice of delivery location to you?	5.07	0.96
C12	How important is achieving the qualifications?	5.64	0.61
C13	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which takes account of work you do in your job?	5.57	0.62
C14	How important is it that assignments and activities are based around your real work?	5.71	0.59
C15	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which is assessed and not exam based?	5.64	0.61
C16	How important is it that you attend a local institution?	4.14	1.73

Table 4.2 The mean and standard deviation across learner questions

The most important aspect for learners was that their employer was investing in them and their programme of study, with a mean of 5.79 and the least deviation in responses (0.41). Similarly, it was important that the Apprenticeship Levy be the source of the funding with a mean of 5.77 and standard deviation of 0.42. It was important that the programme is based around real work (5.71) and takes account of work undertaken (5.57), that learners achieve qualifications (5.64), that the programme is assessment and not exam based (5.64), that the programme is subject to review (5.50), that the

CMDA is aligned with the student's personal development needs (5.50), that an evaluation of the programme effectiveness be undertaken (5.07) and the location of delivery (5.07).

In contrast, a mean of 3.86 felt there should be a financial return for their employer, however that question had the second largest deviation in responses (1.51). 3.64 was the mean response when asked if students felt they should personally achieve a financial return from being on the programme, with a deviation of 1.39 across responses. When asked if it was important that they attended a private university centre, a mean of only 3.79 felt it was and there was a standard deviation of 1.47 amongst responders. To the question of whether it was important to attend a local institution, scored a mean of 4.14 and the largest deviation in responses (1.73); suggesting it is of significantly greater importance to some students. These factors will now be analysed demographically.

		# responders	gender		course chooser			age		sector				existing qualification			
			male	female	employer	manager	student	25-40	41+	education	finance	care	media	degree	apprentice	NVQ	CMI
			8	6	7	2	5	7	7	2	5	4	3	7	0	8	2
		mean															
C1	How important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding your programme?		5.75	5.80	5.71	6.00	5.80	5.57	6.00	5.50	5.60	6.00	6.00	5.57		6.00	6.00
C2	How important is that your employer is investing in you and your programme of learning?		5.75	5.83	5.71	6.00	5.80	5.57	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.75	5.33	5.86		5.88	5.50
C3	How important is it that your programme is periodically reviewed and actions taken to make modifications?		5.25	5.83	5.43	5.50	5.60	5.57	5.43	5.00	5.40	5.50	6.00	5.14		5.63	5.00
C4	How important is it that your choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to your organisational needs?		5.38	5.60	5.17	5.50	5.80	5.33	5.57	6.00	4.80	6.00	5.67	5.33		5.63	6.00
C5	How important is it that your choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to your personal development needs?		5.25	5.83	5.57	5.50	5.40	5.57	5.43	5.50	5.20	6.00	5.33	5.43		5.50	5.50
C6	How important is it that your participation on the CMDA achieves a financial return for your employer?		4.63	2.83	4.14	2.50	4.00	4.00	3.71	5.00	3.80	2.50	5.00	4.00		3.75	4.50
C7	How important is it that your participation on the CMDA achieves a financial return for you personally?		4.13	3.00	4.00	2.50	3.60	4.14	3.14	4.50	3.20	3.25	4.33	4.14		3.50	4.00
C8	How important is it that training evaluation is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme?		5.38	4.67	4.71	5.00	5.60	4.86	5.29	6.00	5.00	4.50	5.33	4.86		5.25	6.00
C9	How important is it that your provider is a private university centre?		4.25	3.17	2.57	4.50	5.20	3.57	4.00	3.50	4.00	3.00	4.67	3.57		3.63	4.50
C10	How important is it that your provider understands your industry?		5.25	5.00	4.71	5.50	5.60	4.71	5.57	6.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00		5.38	5.50
C11	How important is it the choice of delivery location to you?		5.38	4.67	4.29	5.50	6.00	4.57	5.57	5.00	5.20	4.50	5.67	4.57		5.25	6.00
C12	How important is achieving the qualifications?		5.75	5.50	5.57	6.00	5.60	5.57	5.71	6.00	5.80	5.50	5.33	5.71		5.75	5.50
C13	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which takes account of work you do in your job?		5.63	5.50	5.29	6.00	5.80	5.29	5.86	6.00	5.40	5.50	5.67	5.43		5.75	6.00
C14	How important is it that assignments and activities are based around your real work?		5.88	5.50	5.43	6.00	6.00	5.57	5.86	6.00	5.60	5.50	6.00	5.57		5.88	6.00
C15	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which is assessed and not exam based?		5.38	6.00	5.86	5.50	5.40	5.43	5.86	6.00	5.40	6.00	5.33	5.57		5.88	5.50
C16	How important is it that you attend a local institution?		4.00	4.33	3.86	5.50	4.00	3.29	5.00	2.00	5.00	4.75	3.33	3.57		4.50	1.50

Table 4.3 Importance corresponding to learner demographic characteristics

The results (in Table 4.3) suggest very little gender response differential with the greatest difference on question C6, how important is it that their participation on the CMDA achieves a return for them personally, with male responders selecting this as being important (4.63) and female as unimportant (2.83). On this question, the responses differ depending on whom had chosen the CMDA course for the student. When the student or the employer (at corporate level) had chosen the course this was seen as important (4.00 & 4.14 respectively), conversely, when their manager had decided that they should go on the course, the students felt that it was unimportant that the employer should achieve a financial return (2.50). The responses to this question (C6) also varied depending on the sector in which the responders operate, with those in education and media selecting it as moderately important (5.00 & 5.00), those in finance suggesting it as important but less so (3.80) whereas those in the care sector felt it was unimportant (2.50).

The questionnaire contained three age bands: <25; 25-40; 41+. The rationale of the banding was to explore differences between those learners that are likely to be in their first full time occupation, those that may have changed occupation following the previous qualifications and those who have likely changed occupation several times and that may be focusing towards a more final occupation. The age bands were also to reflect those learners who have only known the Internet age, those who have experienced the world with and without the Internet. None of the responders were in the <25years age bracket, so some on the comparisons were not possible.

Question C7 sought to establish the importance of the programme participation achieving a financial return for the students personally. There was a difference between male and female responses (4.13 & 3.00) and comparing that with C6 responses shows that the men thought it was slightly less important that they should achieve a personal financial return (4.13 vs 4.63) and the women felt it was very slightly more important (3.00 vs 2.83). This question (C7) also had sectoral variance responses which were very similar to the C6 responses. When their manager chose their course the students did not expect a personal financial return (2.50), compared with when the student chose the course themselves (3.60) or their employer chose

(4.00). C7 saw a variation of response depending on the responder's age, with those aged 41+ believing it was only slightly unimportant (3.14) and those aged 25-40 believing it to be slightly important (4.14).

The other question that saw a difference in responses across the age groups was that of C16, how important is it that the students attend a local institution, where those aged 41+ felt it was important (5.00) and those aged 25-40 felt it was unimportant (3.29); which may be reflection of how the younger students have become used to on-line facilities and global availability. This question (C16) also saw a substantial variation in responses depending on the prior qualifications undertaken by the students.   Those with Chartered Management Institute qualifications (CMI) qualifications felt it was very unimportant (1.50), whereas those that had undertaken NVQs felt it was important (4.50) and those with an existing degree felt it was slightly unimportant (3.57).

All responders felt it was important that an evaluation be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme (C8), however those with an existing degree felt is was slightly less important (4.86) than those with an NVQ (5.25) or a CMI qualification who thought it very important (6.00). This may be a reflection linked to perception based on past qualification experience. Undergraduates often choose their degree before they know which sector or job they will be working in, whereas the CMI qualifications are developed by a sector that represents existing managers, those already working. Furthermore, applicants applying to become a chartered manager must demonstrate the effectiveness of their past learning, which may be an influencing factor.

Considering sectoral differences shows that when asked how important it is that the CMDA is aligned to the organisational needs, the responders from the educational sector, care and media, all thought it was very important (6.00; 6.00 and 5.67 respectively), whereas the students from the financial sector scored that an average of 4.80 suggesting they felt it was slightly less important.

In response to how important it is that they attend a local institution, this was important to the students from the finance sector (5.00) and the care sector (4.75) and unimportant to those from education (2.00) and only of slight importance to those from the media (3.33).

The survey (C9) asked how important it was that the provider is a private university centre. Across the demographic grouping this had a slight variance between slightly unimportant and slightly important, however the greatest variation was depending on the course chooser. When the students had chosen the course they felt that it was moderately important (5.20) in comparison, those whose employer had chosen the course felt it was moderately unimportant (2.57).

When surveyed about the importance of the delivery location (C11), when students had chosen the course they responded that this was very important to them (6.00) whereas it was only slightly important if their employer had chosen the course for them (4.29). This may in part be due to the travel time and travel costs. If the student chooses the course, they may be more concerned if the delivery location is further away; whereas this would be less of an issue if the employer chooses the course for them because approval for travel costs and time would be tacitly agreed.

4.3 Findings of the provider survey

Table 4.4 shows the percentage of provider responses in terms of their deemed importance

	Part C questions	very unimportant	moderately unimportant	slightly unimportant	slightly important	moderately important	very important	disagree total	agree total
C1	How important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding the CMDA programme?	0	0	8	8	15	69	8	92
C2	How important is that employers are investing in the programme of learning?	0	0	0	8	0	92	0	100
C3	How important is it that the programme is periodically reviewed and actions taken to make modifications?	0	0	0	8	8	85	0	100
C4	How important is it that the choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to the organisational needs?	0	0	8	0	23	69	8	92
C5	How important is it that the choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to the student's personal development needs?	0	0	0	0	15	85	0	100
C6	How important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the employer?	0	0	0	38	46	15	0	100
C7	How important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the student personally?	0	0	0	31	62	8	0	100
C8	How important is it that training evaluation is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme?	0	0	0	0	8	92	0	100
C9	How important is it that the provider is a private university centre?	8	8	23	38	15	8	38	62
C10	How important is it that the provider understands the student's industry?	0	0	0	23	8	69	0	100
C11	How important is it the choice of delivery location to the students or employer?	0	0	0	0	38	62	0	100
C12	How important is achieving the qualifications to students?	0	0	0	0	23	77	0	100
C13	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which takes account of work students do in their job?	0	0	0	0	8	92	0	100
C14	How important is it that assignments and activities are based around real work?	0	0	0	0	23	77	0	100
C15	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which is assessed and not exam based?	0	0	0	0	38	62	0	100
C16	How important is where UCQ is based?	8	23	0	31	23	15	31	69

Table 4.4 Summary of provider survey responses

The provider survey was conducted amongst thirteen responders consisting of UCQ staff, from an overall population of twenty. Responders were approached by the researcher via email and asked if they wished to volunteer to complete the survey.

In terms of positive responses (Table 4.4), 100% of respondents felt it was important that employers are investing in the programme, with 92% saying it was very important. 100% said it was important that the programme is reviewed and modified, 85% selecting it as very important. Similarly, 100% said it was important that CMDA is aligned to the student's personal development needs, 85% selecting very important. 100% said it was important that the CMDA achieve a financial return for the employer, however only 15% said it was very important and 38% selected only slightly important. In response to C7, 100% agreed that the CMDA participation should result in a personal financial return for the student, but only 8% thought this was very important against 62% selecting moderately important. 100% agreed that the training should undergo an evaluation to determine its effectiveness, 92% selecting that this was very important. All responders agreed that it was important that the provider understands the student's industry, that the choice of delivery location is important, that it is important for the students that they gain a qualification, that the CMDA is assessed not examined, and that the programme is based around real work activities and should benefit the business (agreeing with Helyer 2015c). 100% said it was important that the programme take account of student's work from their job and that the assessment specifically reflect that this is an (HM Government 2015a), with 92% saying that this was very important. 92% agreed that it was important that the Apprenticeship Levy is the source of funding and 69% felt that was very important (DfE 2016). Similarly, 92% agreed that the CMDA should be aligned to the organisational need and 69% said that was very important.

Only two of the statements received negative responses: how important is it that the provider is a private university centre (62% agreed of which 38% said it was only slightly important; 69% said that the location of UCQ is important, but 31% said it was only slightly important.

Table 4.5 depicts the mean and standard deviation across the provider importance statements

		Mean	Standard deviation
C1	How important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding the CMDA programme?	5.46	0.93
C2	How important is that employers are investing in the programme of learning?	5.85	0.53
C3	How important is it that the programme is periodically reviewed and actions taken to make modifications?	5.77	0.58
C4	How important is it that the choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to the organisational needs?	5.54	0.84
C5	How important is it that the choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to the student's personal development needs?	5.85	0.36
C6	How important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the employer?	4.77	0.70
C7	How important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the student personally?	4.77	0.58
C8	How important is it that training evaluation is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme?	5.92	0.27
C9	How important is it that the provider is a private university centre?	3.69	1.26
C10	How important is it that the provider understands the student's industry?	5.46	0.84
C11	How important is it the choice of delivery location to the students or employer?	5.62	0.49
C12	How important is achieving the qualifications to students?	5.77	0.42
C13	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which takes account of work students do in their job?	5.92	0.27
C14	How important is it that assignments and activities are based around real work?	5.77	0.42
C15	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which is assessed and not exam based?	5.62	0.49
C16	How important is where UCQ is based?	3.85	1.56

Table 4.5 The mean and standard deviation across provider questions

The greatest deviation in responses was in question C9, how important is it that the provider is a private university centre (1.26) and question C16, how important is the location of UCQ (1.56). Overall, comparing with the learner responses shows very little difference, suggesting that there is congruence between what the student feels is important and what the provider staff feel is important.

The provider responses will now be explored demographically to see if the job role of provider staff is a key influencer.

Table 4.6 provides a representation of the mean provider responses by job role

		Main job role				
		Management	Governance	Lecturing	Assessing	Administration
C1	How important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding the CMDA programme?	5.60	4.67	5.50	6.00	6.00
C2	How important is that employers are investing in the programme of learning?	6.00	5.33	6.00	6.00	6.00
C3	How important is it that the programme is periodically reviewed and actions taken to make modifications?	5.60	5.67	6.00	6.00	6.00
C4	How important is it that the choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to the organisational needs?	5.20	5.67	6.00	5.00	6.00
C5	How important is it that the choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to the student's personal development needs?	5.80	6.00	5.50	6.00	6.00
C6	How important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the employer?	4.80	4.67	5.00	6.00	4.00
C7	How important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the student personally?	4.80	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
C8	How important is it that training evaluation is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme?	5.80	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
C9	How important is it that the provider is a private university centre?	3.60	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.50
C10	How important is it that the provider understands the student's industry?	4.80	6.00	5.50	6.00	6.00
C11	How important is it the choice of delivery location to the students or employer?	5.80	5.00	6.00	6.00	5.50
C12	How important is achieving the qualifications to students?	5.80	6.00	5.50	6.00	5.50
C13	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which takes account of work students do in their job?	5.80	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
C14	How important is it that assignments and activities are based around real work?	5.60	6.00	5.50	6.00	6.00
C15	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which is assessed and not exam based?	5.60	5.33	6.00	6.00	5.50
C16	How important is where UCQ is based?	3.80	3.67	3.50	5.00	4.00

Table 4.6 Importance corresponding to provider responder's job role

In response to C1, how important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding the CMDA programme, UCQ governors scored a mean of 4.67, slightly important, whereas staff in assessing and administrative roles felt it was very important. In response to C2, how important is it that employers are investing in the programme, governors scored this a mean of 5.33, whereas all other staff said it was very important.

On question C6, how important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the employer, those in assessment roles said it was very important (6.00), compared with administrators who thought it only slightly important (4.00).

On question C9, the importance of the provider being a private university centre, governors though it unimportant (3.00), as did managers (3.60) whereas administrators thought it of some importance (4.50). Governors, assessors and administrators thought it very important (6.00) that the provider understands the student's industry, however managers thought it less important (4.80). On the question on the importance of where UCQ is based (C16), only the assessors thought it important (5.00); which is a surprising finding in that the assessors are peripatetic and usually visit the students at their workplace.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has detailed the results from the quantitative research, the learner and provider surveys. Visual and data analysis have identified areas of variance and areas requiring deeper investigation in the qualitative research phase.

The next chapter details the thematic analysis and overall discussion resulting from the research.

5 Thematic analysis findings and discussion

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings from the quantitative research, the learner and provider questionnaires. This chapter presents, analyses and then synthesizes the results of the qualitative research undertaken in conjunction with the quantitative data in Chapter 4, according the methods described in Chapter 3 Research Methods. The results of the qualitative phase are presented analysed and then synthesized thematically, grouped according to the research questions. The questions are examined in order, leading to the final synthesis and the development of a model to support degree apprenticeship providers:

RQ1: How does the learner (apprentice) experience compare with their expectation(s)?

RQ2: What are the delivery tensions faced by staff delivering the CMDA and how can they be overcome?

RQ3: What is the likely situation for a North East based alternative provider of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA)?

5.1 Population and sampling

The provider interviews were conducted amongst six responders consisting of UCQ staff, from an overall population of twenty. Responders had indicated that they wished to volunteer to be interviewed, on the questionnaire. The researcher used representative (non-probability), purposive sampling with a degree of heterogeny in terms of staff position and involvement with the UCQ CMDA delivery.

The learner interviews were conducted amongst six responders consisting of UCQ staff, from an overall population of thirty. Responders had indicated that they wished to volunteer to be interviewed, on the questionnaire. The researcher used

representative (non-probability), purposive sampling amongst a homogenous sample of students on the second year of their programme.

The employer interviews were conducted amongst four responders consisting of UCQ clients, from an overall population of twelve. Responders were approached directly by the researcher as asked if they would participate. The researcher used representative (non-probability), purposive sampling with a degree of heterogeny in that the employers were of different sizes, from different areas in England and operating in different market sectors.

5.2 The development of the coding framework

In order to understand and interpret the meaning of qualitative data the researcher will commonly start by codifying their data whilst considering the themes being discussed. In this study a template-based data coding approach was used. The coding template was developed and refined throughout this study. As the start of the study there were three main themes with likely codes as follows:

Initial main themes	Likely codes (sub groupings)
Work-based learning	Delivery approach
	Assignments and contextualisation
	Employer needs
	Return on Leadership
	Return on investment / value
Learner type and motivation	Lifelong learning
	Learner recruitment and management
	Motivation
HE approaches	Assessment methods
	Vocational

Table 5.1 The initial coding template

The literature review led to the addition of 'value' as a distinct main theme, whereas it was previously a theme alongside 'return on investment'. 'Ego' was added to Learner Type and Motivation, 'Entry, mobility and closure' and 'Policy tensions' were added as codes against the HE approaches theme.

Developed main themes	Codes
Value	Employer investment
	Apprenticeship Levy
	Return on Leadership
	Mapping of need
	Return on investment
Learner type and motivation	Lifelong learning
	Learner recruitment and management
	Motivation
	Ego
Work-based learning	Delivery approach
	Assignments and contextualisation
HE approaches	Entry, mobility and closure
	Policy tensions
	Assessment methods
	Vocational

Table 5.2 The coding template following the review of literature

The mixed methods approach identified further codes "Place-based" and "Civic development" which were then explored in depth during the interviews and final focus groups, providing a final coding template as follows:

Final main themes	Final codes (sub groupings)
Value	Employer investment
	Apprenticeship Levy
	Return on Leadership
	Mapping of need
	Return on investment
Learner type and motivation	Lifelong learning
	Learner recruitment and management
	Motivation
	Ego
Work-based learning	Delivery approach
	Assignments and contextualisation
HE approaches	Entry, mobility and closure
	Policy tensions
	Assessment methods
	Vocational
	Place-based
	Civic development

Table 5.3 The final coding template (adapted from Blair, 2015)
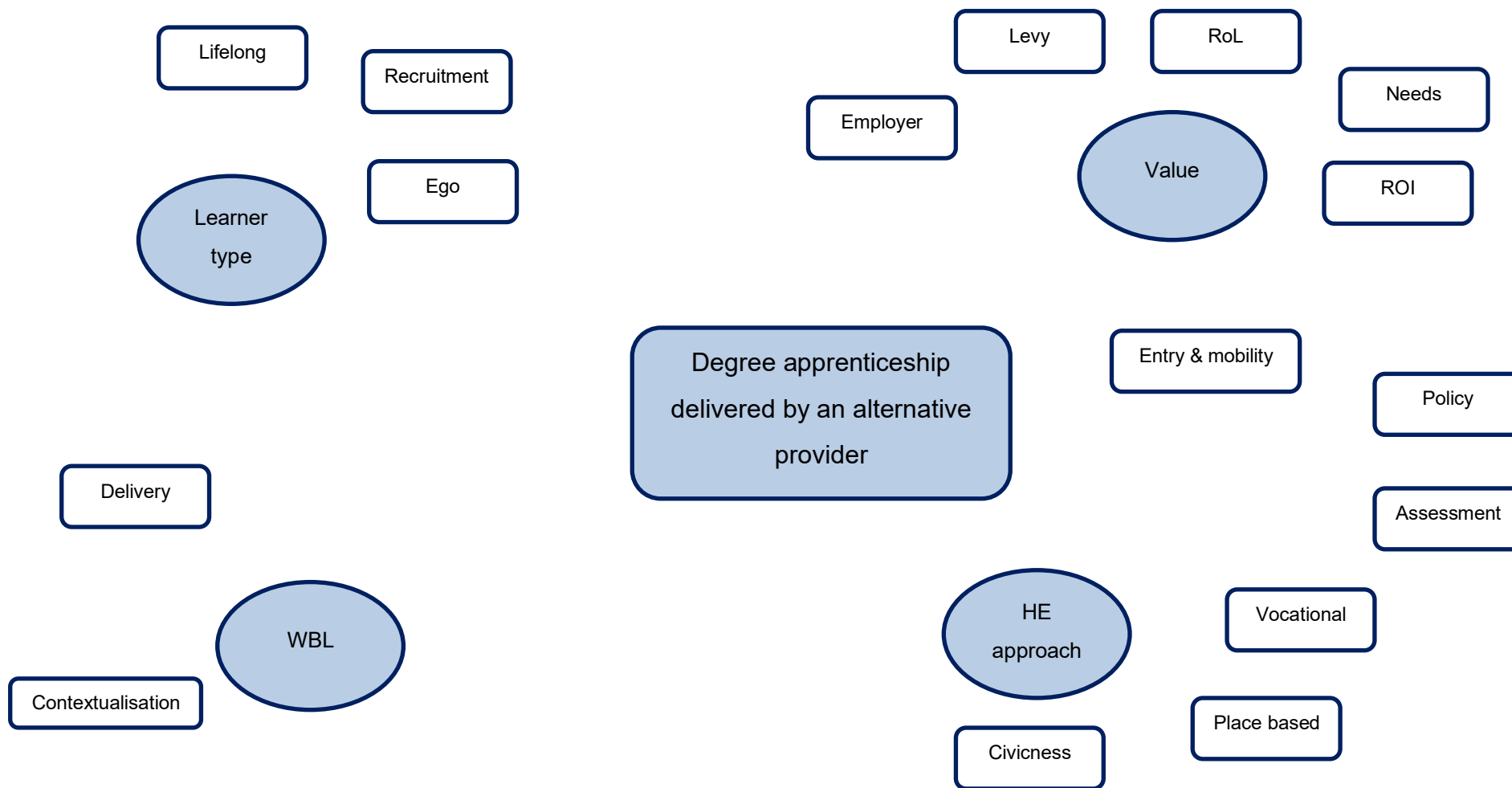
Figure 5.1 – Themes linked to the parent

5.3 Research question 1: How does the learner (apprentice) experience compare with their expectation(s)?

In order to answer this question, the researcher will analyse and synthesis the learner and employer responses alongside each other.

5.3.1 Discussion of the themes

Each of the themes is now discussed below:

5.3.1.1 Value

Employer investment. The learners overwhelmingly felt it was important that their employer was investing in their programme of learning, this was clear from the interviews, focus groups and the survey (where 100% said it was important). However the financial percentage employer contribution seemed unimportant.

> *I like that my employer is contributing towards my program. I'm not bothered by how much their contribution is.* (LER06)

Employers also indicated that they saw themselves as investing in their staff, not just in terms of a financial investment for the programme, but also in terms of the wages and off-the-job activity.

> *[….] employers are not only paying the levy [but also the] apprentice's wages I think there was a lot of resistance at the start from employers [and] I think the reasons for that were more around ... not necessarily around them seeing the value in the training, but more around being able to free people up to do the training, because it's not necessarily an issue with the levy, but it's more about the 20% off-the-job training element* (EMP01)

The level of employer co-investment (whether 10% or 5%) appeared not to be an issue for any of the employers in this study, but there was a feeling that it could be for others.

Personally I don't think [a drop from 10% to 5%] will [have an impact]. I think once ourselves and other employers realize that you do have to pay a contribution, it may encourage employers who did not want to pay 10% to actually invest. But [company name] very much about lifelong learning and continuing professional development, and the 10% contribution, as I say, is not an issue for ourselves. Therefore, 5% will not have that big an effect. […] but I strongly believe that it would on some organizations. (EMP01)

Apprenticeship Levy impact (funding). The learner survey revealed that most learners surveyed (11 of 14) and the employers are now aware of the Levy, compared with a 2016 survey (Mapletoft, 2017) where the majority of learners were unaware of the Levy and employers at that time knew only a little. The interviews and focus groups revealed that students were made aware of the Levy by their employers or the media. Employers indicated that they know about the Levy from a variety of sources including through their HR and corporate departments, the press, HMRC, external consultancies, industry representative groups including the CIPD, and through providers.
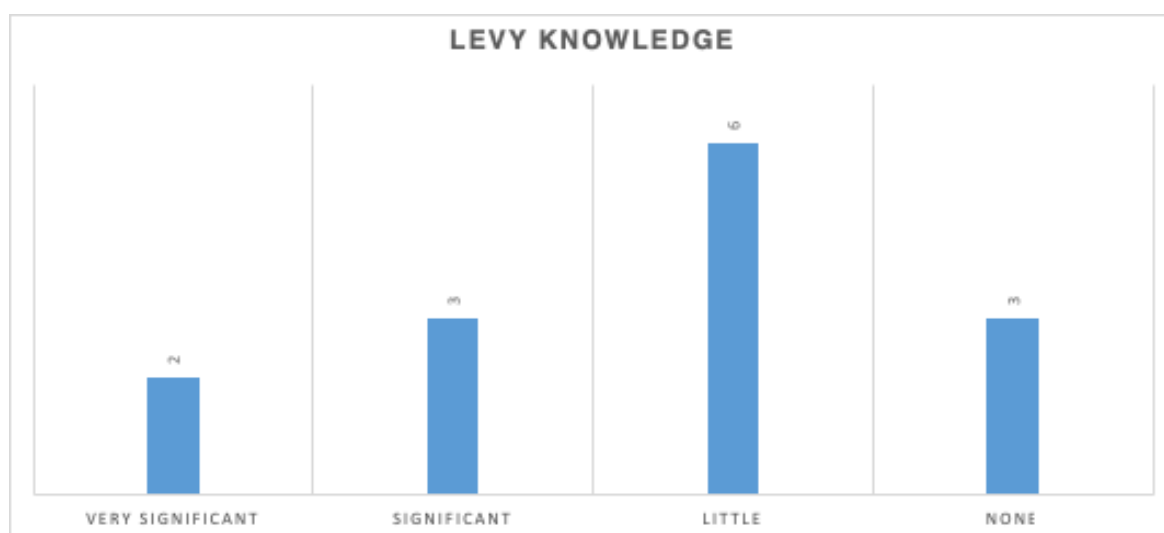
Figure 5.2 – Distribution showing the student's awareness of the Apprenticeship Levy (from Part B of the survey questionnaire)

Asking whether the Levy is a public or private source of funding revealed different answers and some confusion amongst learners.

It must be private, it's [my employer's] money (LER03)

It's private…no wait…it's a levy. Does that make it public? (LER05)

This was raised again at a focus group in which LER05 was again present, at which point he clarified that he had looked into it and that it is a public fund. When asked if it matters (whether the fund id public or private), the answer was perhaps more revealing:

Yes I think it does. I mean I still think of it as my company investing in my development. (LER05)

It was clear from the survey that the Levy (92%) and employer (100%) as funders was important. The interviews revealed a number of reasons why the students would not have taken out a loan or otherwise paid for their course themselves including debt aversion, existing student loans and lack of finance, however it seems more important that their employer is investing in them. When asked if their employer would have invested in them without the Levy, most said probably not.

Needs mapping. This survey has provided mixed responses when trying to determine the type and extent of the mapping of organizational and individual needs and relevance for the programme. Initial indications were that the organisations involved had undertaken some form of needs analysis.

[…] needs mapping is done in-house. (LER01)

Sometimes the needs analysis was undertaken by the learner themselves.

We [a group of learners from the same employer] put forward a business case to our employer and [..] made the final decision. (LER03)

Probing uncovered that it was often informal and none of the employers interviewed, nor the students, had the benefit of the services of an external training needs analyst.

We do not use an external training needs analyst. […] Before I started my apprenticeship, I do not believe formal needs mapping with regards to staffing and business skill gaps were undertaken. (LER01)

[…] whilst it was kind of informal not necessarily recorded, it was discussed and determined that it was something that would be a benefit. (LER02)

In some cases the employer interviews provided similar responses. Both EMP02 and EMP04 stated that they had undertaken a training needs analysis and gain, probing showed it was sometimes informal.

[…] I would say it's probably formally informal […] So not necessarily ... In a way, it's a training needs analysis because if we do identify opportunity for improvement, then we will invest in developing skills to fill or to meet that opportunity, to fill in the gap. But I wouldn't go so far as to say that we approach this under the specific banner of a training needs analysis. (EMP02)

Of those interviewed, EMP04 had undertaken the most formal needs analysis but did not appear to have followed a set methodology. All of the employers indicated that the needs analysis was focused on the individual first and then the organisation.

Return on investment (ROI).

The learner questionnaire asked whether the programme should result in a calculated ROI. Only half the respondents answered that question, with only 14% agreeing that it should.
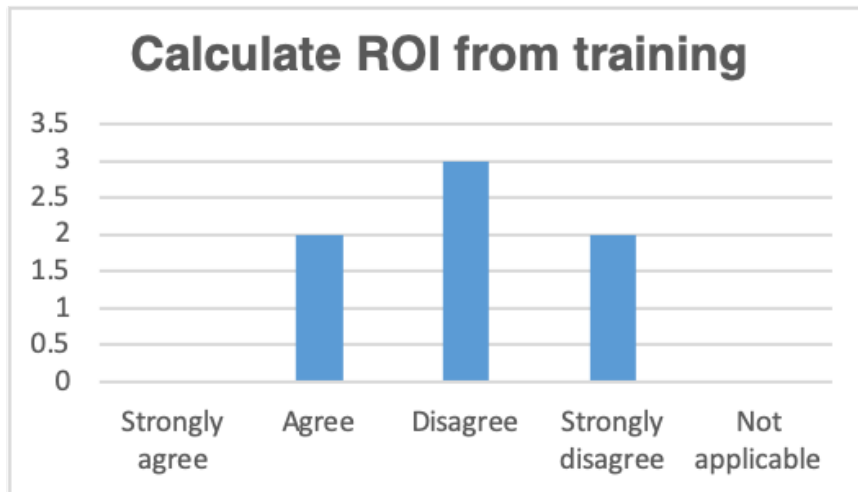
Figure 5.3 – Distribution of student (apprentice) responses when asked if their programme should result in a calculated ROI (from Part B of the survey questionnaire)

Picking this up at the interview stage provided a different picture, possibly due to the word 'calculated' on the questionnaire. The interviewees felt that there should be an ROI, but that it can be difficult to calculate (concurring with Estrada & Connolly, 2015; Kinkaid and Gordick, 2003).

There should be a return […] I don't know how you would measure it. (LER06)

How you convert that into figures and finance, I would say that's something which is very, very difficult to do, but it's something that is important to try and at least look at, and try and put a figure on. (LER02)

When asked whom should see the ROI, there was evidence that the interviewees felt it should be the investor, in agreement with Caplan (2007; 2018).

Whoever pays should see the largest return on investment. (LER01)

The learner interviews gave an indication that the employer, as investor, should achieve an ROI, but that it is difficult to calculate. There was no suggestion at this

stage in the interviews that the state or government is the investor or that there should be a civic return.

The employers interviewed also felt that the company (rather than the individual) should achieve an ROI, but similarly, there was the suggestion that calculating an ROI would be difficult.

I will be looking for positive impact down the line […] I'm looking for that to essentially manifest and translate itself through to improved earnings and employee engagement. (EMP02)

[The Company] will expect a return […] I don't know how we will calculate that yet. (EMP04)

5.3.1.2 Learner Type and motivation

Lifelong learning. In initial questioning the learners tended not to categorise themselves as lifelong learners although some expressed an interest in informal learning (LER02 & LER05). There was an indication that the perception was that lifelong learning is about constantly undertaking qualifications, rather than learning as such. When asked whether there were barriers that prevented them from participating in lifelong learning, responses included lack of finance (LER01 & LER05) lack of opportunity (LER06), internal (perceived barriers (LER02 & LER03), time, work and family pressures (LER02, LER04 & LER06). When asked if they were likely to continue their studies after the CMDA, 83.3% said they were actively considering it.

Learner recruitment and management. The research looked at the student motivators as a way of then comparing the reality of their experience with the main motivators which had prompted them to start the programme. On the questionnaire students could choose one or more of the options.
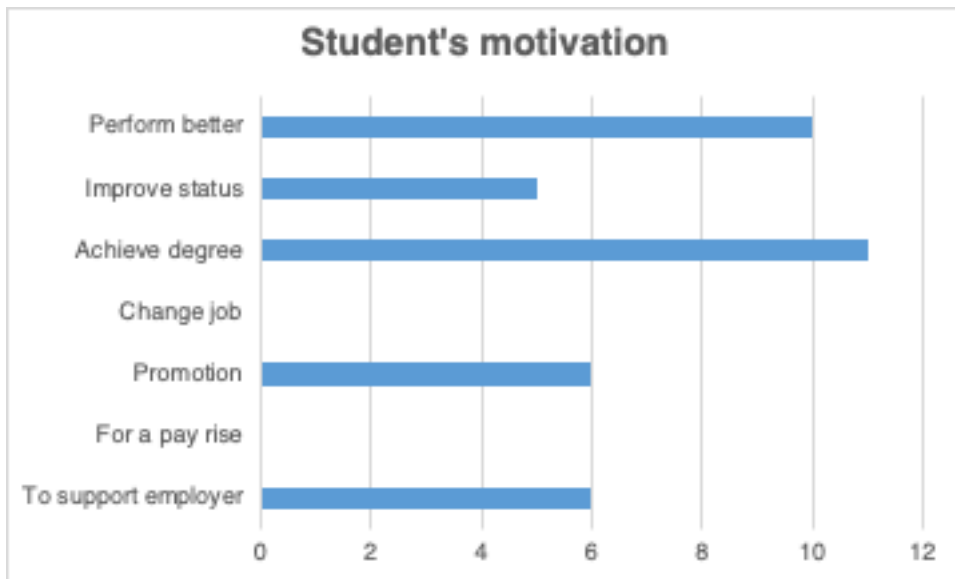
Figure 5.4 – Distribution of student motivation for undertaking the CMDA (from Part B of the survey questionnaire)

11 of the 14 (i.e. 79%) respondents said an important motivator was the degree qualification, which compared to 100% of respondents in an earlier study (Mapletoft, 2017), 10 said to perform better in their current job role, 5 to improve their professional status, 6 in the hope of being promoted and 6 to support their employer.

Some of these findings are largely at variance with other published studies. Whereas in this study 79% said that achieving the degree qualification is a main motivator, a DBIS study (DBIS 2016b p.69) determined that only 3% of apprentices on a Level 5 apprenticeship started on their programme to gain a qualification, to improve their prospects by strengthening their CV, or to improve on their knowledge. This gives an indication of the importance of the degree itself and when coupled with the fact that 71% said that they also wanted to perform better in their job, provides a likely indication that the 'sheepskin effect' described by Caplan (2018) is not the only motivator for the degree apprentices.

Almost half (43%) of the learners wanted to support their employer, somewhat in agreement with Helyer (& Garnett, 2016; UVAC, 2015) that work-based learning is a tri-partite beneficial relationship involving not just the learner and provider, but also benefits the employer.

Just over a third (36%) were motivated to improve their professional status, indicating that the degree qualification is of significantly greater importance as a motivator over becoming a Chartered Manager.

None of the responders indicated they were motivated by the prospect of a pay rise, which concurs with a DBIS report (DBIS 2016b p.69) where 99% of the Level 5 apprentices did not expect a pay rise, but differs from an earlier study (Mapletoft, 2017) where 37% of respondents were motivated by a potential pay rise. However, 43% selected that they were motivated by a potential promotion, compared with 11% (in DBIS 2016b) and 53% (in Mapletoft, 2017), and it is likely that a promotion would result in a pay rise. There was a suggestion of changes in motivation, as with other HE learners, the motivation to start the course (Knowles, 1950:2015) is unlikely to be sufficient to keep the student motivated throughout the course (Caplan, 2018).

Employers were involved in the recruitment process, with all of the employers interviewed indicating that they had promoted the CMDA course to their staff. The provider was involved in helping promote the course and its benefits to all of the employers interviewed, although some had been actively looking for a management development programme.

We were looking for a programme [but had been] looking at the [Level 5 standard].
(EMP04)

[Company name] is always keen on L&M programmes as a way of retaining and developing [our staff], we just hadn't considered the CMDA. (EMP01)

The questionnaire asked the students who had chosen the course.
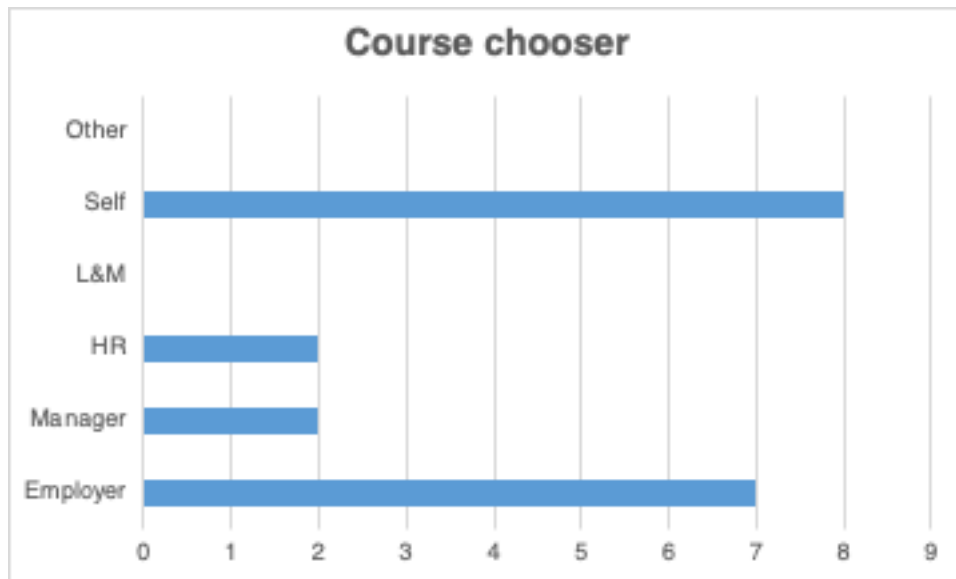
Figure 5.5 – Distribution showing who chose the course (from Part B of the survey questionnaire)

Eight (57%) had chosen the course themselves. 2 (14%) said HR and 2 (14%) said their manager, with 50% (7) saying their employer (but presumably higher up than their manager). Apprenticeships are often decided upon by the employer (DBIS, 2016b), whereas the literature suggests that HE programmes are often the decision of the learner (Caplan, 2018) or indeed their parents (Collini, 2012). An HE WBL programme is however often equally the decision of the learner and the employer (UVAC, 2015).

Ego. There were suggestions that ego (Peters, 2012; Gawdat, 2017) is influencing students and that there is associated pressure and stress. It was affecting students with an existing degree:

I already have a 2:1 [degree]. There's no way I would want to get a lower grade on this one. (LER01)

and those without an existing degree but who are in senior positions:

I do feel a strong sense of competition. If I get [a lower grade than my colleagues], it will reflect badly on me. (LER06)

Mine was more just from professional reputation point of view at the start, which was I would look, this was my interpretation rightly or wrongly, and probably say that as wrongly now, is my view was if I don't get a really high mark on this course, that's going to be ... People are going to perceive me as not being as good professionally as I would if I didn't. (LER02)

There was an acknowledgement that some competition between students is healthy, and that too much pressure can be negative. There was little evidence of learners working together, whereas employers said that they should be:

This is a management programme. I would expect my managers to be working together both on and off the programme. (EMP02)

5.3.1.3 Work-based learning

Delivery approach.

The learners were asked about the CMDA delivery staff in an attempt to gauge how students perceive the staff, whether as academic lecturers, or WBL tutors, and whether the students had a preference. Of the interviewed learners, LER01 had recently (within the last decade) completed a university campus-based degree programme and was probably best able to compare staff delivery approaches.

There is a difference [between WBL tutors and lecturers]...at [my previous] University we attended lectures in lecture halls and there was no way of interacting with [lecturers]. Here [at UCQ] the classes are interactive and inclusive; you have to be involved, [as a student] there's nowhere to hide!
So long as they are competent and engaging I do not mind what their title is.
(LER01)

Other learners (LER02, LER05 & LER06) said that it was important that their tutors had experience in business and that it was often the anecdotal interjections that were the most 'sticky'.

When asked if there was a difference in caliber between staff of the University and UCQ:

> *That's a hard question…I mean in some ways yes. UCQ doesn't have any professors. But I don't know if it means the course is any less good. [The CMDA] is more work centered, and the [delivery] staff reflect that.   (LER01)*

The importance of having delivery staff with industry experience was also raised by employers:

> *I think tutors must have real world experience. It gives a form of validity to their teaching…and means they will better understand the realities of some of the pressure the learners face. (EMP01)*

> *I want my staff [that are learners on the programme] to come back to me and say "That lecturer really knows what they're talking about". That means not just the theory, which is clearly important, but an understanding that things are not simple. The application of the theory is possibly more important. (EMP02)*

> *We want people who have proven themselves in business. (EMP04)*

Learners (LER05 & LER06) indicated that they valued what they saw as a positive working relationship with their UCQ WBL assessor.

> *[My WBL assessor] doesn't just tell me what I need, [they] will work with me to gather [my portfolio] evidence. I feel like [they] want to help me. (LER06)*

Learners and employers spoke of the importance of online availability and the virtual learning environment (VLE), with one employer (EMP04) stating that UCQ's VLE availability is so important to them that they had inserted penalty clauses into their apprenticeship contract with UCQ. There was a sense that learners had different expectations of the VLE, with some happy enough that it served as a document repository, whilst others felt it was not yet meeting their needs.

Assignments and contextualisation.

Both employers and learners talked about the importance of assignments and learning that are related to the jobs staff undertake and the industries they work in. When asked if the UCQ CMDA programme is as contextualized as they understood it would be, answers differed.

> The [CDMA] programme is [contextualized] but it isn't tailored …. More could be done to relate it to [our industry]. (EMP03)

> I don't know really. I haven't had any complaints [from our staff learners]. (EMP04)

> I've been able to relate it to [my industry]. So I'd say yes [the UCQ CMDA is sufficiently contextualized] (LER05)

> …[it is] giving people the skills they require in order to be more effective and, therefore, improve the business. It's almost like it goes that whole circle and is joined up. As opposed to giving people some skills and knowledge in a theoretical sense, and a non-contextualized, non-applied sense, which is the traditional university business schools route I mean; that's a generalization, by the way. (LER02)

Whereas LER06 doesn't think that UCQ's CMDA is contextualized enough.

> [UCQ's CMDA] has assignments that I can relate to my work, but I wouldn't say that the assignments are actually based upon or around my work. It's not what I would

think of as being fully contextualized. There's not enough working together [with
other students] either. (LER06)

5.3.1.4 Higher education approach

Entry, mobility and closure.

The learners interviewed had not experienced difficulties in trying to get into university before, although three (LER04, LER05 & LER06) had never applied. LER01 and LER03 are existing graduate and LER02 briefly attended university, suggesting that the learning style and timing were then not right.

> *Maybe it's a learning style thing. I tried for a very, very short period of time the traditional university kind of route back in 1997 , was it, or something like that, and very quickly realized it wasn't for me, and went and got a job, and learnt that way, and learned through the informal means….maybe some things are only right at certain times in people's lives, and they're not right at other times… going to a university was just basically an extension of school. (LER02)*

LER06, LER05 and LER04 did all indicate that they didn't think they would have gained entry to university when they were younger and all three said they were not in a position for their families to support them (when they were younger). Which indicates that the degree apprenticeship is indeed supporting social mobility.

Employers agreed that the degree apprenticeship entry requirements should be supportive of learners who would need help for example with English and/or maths, and who may not have the prior qualifications that would typically be necessary for going to university.

EMP02 said that it was good that the degree apprenticeship is supporting social mobility, but that this wasn't a main driver (for them).

*I think [the degree apprenticeship] does [support the social mobility agenda], yes […]
coming back to the point of authenticity, I do think that if we can help our staff
members become more competent ... Our managers, if we can help our managers
become more competent by developing their knowledge and skills and their
behaviors as a professional manager; if we can do that and if that then has a positive
impact upon the individuals, on their earning potential, their earning ability because
they're better at their job, they get improved results, the business is doing better,
then, coming back again to the principal of sustainability, that has to be a good thing
for the business and for society as a broader map of course.* (EMP02)

Policy tensions.

Opinions were divided over the 20% off-the-job requirement. EMP02 felt it made little
difference to them as an employer, that learners should take responsibility for
managing their time.

*When I think about the people who are in the program, it makes not a jot of
difference to us, to be honest. …. Any discussion with any member of staff in terms
of developing their selves, certainly let's say on the degree apprenticeship or via the
degree apprenticeship, that doesn't absolve those individuals of their scorecard
targets. They still have to achieve the targets that have been agreed upon, and I
expect them, given the level of seniority they have, I expect them to manage their
schedule, their time allocation, their project, their workload as they see fit.* (EMP02)

Whereas EMP01 felt that the 20% off-the-job could be a barrier to participation and
could be problematic for existing programme participants.

*It's difficult. If you equate this to one day a week then it does become problematic,
particularly if you've got managers on the program who have got a significant
operational role to play in the company. Having them away for a day a week would
not work for us. Although I am fully aware that the 20% off-the-job training is a
requirement of any apprenticeship program, however, one size doesn't necessarily fit*

all. Being able to use a variety of different methods in order to do that 20% off-the-job training is really helpful, and being provided with examples of what that can look like has also been beneficial. ……[it is] a barrier, but it hasn't been a barrier for us. We've overcome that, but there are definitely sectors where it is a barrier.

There was the suggestion that in a large employer (EMP04) middle managers are responsible for allowing their staff to undertake off-the-job activities and that this was inconsistent.

Some [managers] are better than others [at facilitating off-the-job time]. It is something we need to address…We can't have staff dictating that they want to work from home or university every Friday, but we also can't have managers refusing to release [their staff] either. (EMP04)

There was general feeling amongst both employers and students that students are likely to spend some of their own time on the programme, either in the evenings or weekends, and that, being a degree, inevitably students would need to undertake at least 20% off-the-job (writing assignments etc.). Learners opinions also differed depending on how their employers understood and facilitated the off-the-job element.

I think the 20% off the job thing has been talked about a lot within the sector, and I think it's a little bit of a red herring in terms of the way it's been talked about…. I think degree apprenticeships have had this applied to them as a consequence of it being applied to lower level apprenticeships. ……. I think the amount of work that you have to put into doing a degree covers your 20% off the job anyway. (LER02)

[My employer] is getting better. When we started we were told [by our employer] that we'd need to attend in the evenings and there was no question that we would need write our assignments in our own time. [UCQ] had to remind [my employer] of the contract which states that [off the job] necessity. (LER03)

[My employer] has been okay…having said that, I do actually work on weekends too.

(LER06)

I have a supportive employer. (LER01)

Assessment methods.

There was general agreement amongst students that the CMDA is better without exams.

The elimination of exams in the CMDA has reduced the inspectorial examination process, but I was okay with exams, I crammed in at the last minute and then aced them. (LER01)

I never liked exams…I had a bad experience [once at College] where I just blanked. I mean I did pass, but I prefer the assignments [on the CMDA]. (LER06)

Learners were from across both mono and multi characteristic cohorts. Some were staff from the same employer in a closed cohort and other with a mixture of people from other companies and sectors. Both groups voiced advantages and disadvantages of their cohort, as did employers. There was certainly a sense that the cohort experience is of value, concurring with Fulton (Kuit, Sanders, & Smith, 2013)

Vocational or industry experience.

There was a feeling amongst employers that having industry experience is important and a general sense that UCQ could improve further in this regard.

I think there's scope for improvement, and I don't think there's any lack of desire to understand business, but I guess gaining access to that knowledge is another thing. I do think that there's a bit of a gap in terms of, let's say, academic understanding and knowledge and really what happens at the coal face in the real world. …..

(EMP02)

Place based.

Both employers and learners were asked about 'place based' institutions. There appeared to be a general lack of understanding of what the term means and indeed why it is perceived to be important. As in the quantitative research, learner views differed when asked about the importance of where UCQ is based. In contrast, the employer responses were generally in agreement that there are more important factors such as what is being delivered and how. The national employers (EMP02 & EMP04) felt that it was difficult for them to ensure a consistency in programme if they were to engage with different universities in different locations.

Civicness.

The questions around civicness caused the greatest confusion amongst employers and learners. The thought that HE learners should be developing themselves as better citizens was so far from the minds of the employers interviewed that they seemed baffled that the question should even be asked. Similarly, the students appeared confused by the question. When the question was fully explained to the interviewees, they seemed baffled that I should even be asking the question. One of the employer representatives at the final employer focus group had attended a civic university and so did understand the question. She felt that for them as an employer, the ideas of being of and for a place, and the developing of HE students as citizens, were less relevant due to the maturity of learners and the work-based relevance.

Consequently, the researcher believes that the idea of civicness is largely seen as being unimportant to the CMDA learners and employers interviewed.

5.4 Research question 2: What are the delivery tensions faced by staff delivering the CMDA and how can they be overcome?

5.4.1 Discussion of the themes

Each of the themes is now discussed below:

5.4.1.1 Value

Employer investment.

Staff tended to think that the reduction in employer co-investment from 10% to 5% might make a difference amongst small employers, but not levy payers (who spend beyond their levy pot). There was a sense that an employer co-investment supports buy-in.

I think that co-investment is important, because that creates a buy-in from the organization. I think part of the difficulty that existed in the past has being around ownership of the program. Ultimately, it is the business, it is the organization that we're contracting with that benefits through the upskilling of their employees. Now, if there isn't an organizational buy-in to that, you don't get the holistic approach of employer, employee and delivering organizations. There have been, and we're aware of this, numerous instances where the employer has a very, very distant input into the overall apprenticeship program, and really what you want is you want that tripartite... (PRO02)

There was also the suggestion that employees would value being invested in by their employer and that it could aid the recruitment of new employees.

I think small companies should be paying something towards it, so they get not only are they getting that amount, but also they're investing, and seen to be investing, in the people who are actually taking it onboard on this. And also bringing, not only existing employees, but also new employees into the organization. (PRO06)

But not all staff thought that there should be a co-investment for small employers, on the basis that employers are already paying the staff wages and on-costs.

I mean historically I would say that where we had lots of SMEs who had apprentices, we've lost a lot of that market because employers can't afford to fund the apprenticeship, pay the wages, et cetera, even if it's just 10% of 5%, whatever it's going to be in the future. So I think from the small organization's point of view, I think probably it should go back to being ... even if it was 1% or a very nominal fee, because they're having to pay the wages of the staff, they're having to recruit them. They're still having to do in-house training and all the additional costs they've got from a business perspective. So therefore, for a lot of firms they can't afford to take on an apprentice plus pay 10% of a fee. (PRO05)

Apprenticeship Levy impact (funding).

In asking whether staff think that the apprenticeship levy is making a difference, there were suggestions that it is not, but that it is likely to in future.

I don't think it is making a difference [....] at the moment. I think it will make a difference going forward because some employers are treating this as tax, some people are actually using it as their budget. (PRO06)

You would have expected that any financial incentive to engage with apprenticeships by employers would have created an increase in apprenticeships, and I think the figures would suggest that it's still fairly static. And so that begs the question, has it had an impact? And perhaps it's too early to tell yet? (PRO02)

Also suggestions that the Levy was having a negative impact.

Yes, I think if you look at the statistics the number of apprentices is declined massively since the levy was introduced and I think there's a number of reasons for that. One, because organizations don't really understand the levy and how it works. Some employers are going to write off the levy because they just don't want to be involved in that process. But I think really a lot of organizations haven't been ready

for the levy, and training departments have looked at how they can support their
existing staff on apprenticeship programs. (PRO05)

Perhaps surprisingly (because UCQ students are being funded through the Levy) amongst UCQ staff there were no suggestions that the Levy is currently having a positive impact.

Needs mapping.

The research found that the earlier Trailblazer apprentices belonged to organisations that had not undertaken a formal training or organizational needs analysis. However, there was emerging opinion that the we are starting to see a more formal set of needs analysis through the Levy and the competitive tendering process, amongst large employers (than seen previously (e.g. Mapletoft, 2017)).

I think that the TNA do take place, especially in large companies. Not so much
in small companies. (PRO06)

This could partly be due to the types of organisations that are tendering, but there is also the indication that the Levy is leading to more formal needs analyses. This could be part of the reason for the current delay in employers starting apprentices.

There were suggestions that UCQ can help organisations undertake TNAs, perhaps in a supplementary role.

I think there's an area there that UCQ could actually get involved in, to carry out the
TNAs. (PRO06)

Return on investment (ROI).

There was a clear sense amongst the provider staff that employers would (and should) expect a return from their investment.

There were suggestions that measuring that return could be difficult.

I've had no indication of how that will be done except through the behavior records that we complete with them; to see if them behaviors improve. (PRO01)

When asked if the Apprenticeship Levy is a public or private fund, opinion was divided.

I think it's, my opinion is, it's a private source. (PRO01)

5.4.1.2 Learner Type and motivation

Learner recruitment and management.

There was an indication that the employers were actively involved in the recruitment and promotional aspects of the course, however, provider staff indicated that all too often that is when the employer's main involvement ended. Staff spoke of proposed developments and placing more emphasis and undertaking more engagement at induction, to encourage employer representatives to be more involved. One of the main tensions with on programme learners is with those whose manager(s) do not give them sufficient time in work to undertake their study programme.

5.4.1.3 Work-based learning

Delivery approach

The tutors (PRO02, PRO03, PRO05, PRO06) considered themselves academics however (PRO02, PRO03 & PRO06) also talked of their industrial experience and links, and the importance of those. The WBL assessor considered themselves less an academic and more an assessor. All four of the tutors also work at other institutions which might explain their uncertainty when asked if they considered themselves to be

tutors, lecturers or facilitators. When asked about their specific role at UCQ, they considered it to be that of a tutor.

More of a tutoring role, definitely […] I think if it was academic and more... academic tends to be more, I'm generalizing, but it tends to be more one-directional. Tutoring is more ... and so it's, it's much more of this is theoretical content and discussing the academic direction of a particular concept. Tutoring is much more about, I think, changing that from the academic to the practical application of an academic concept or an academic piece of research. And it's more two-way dialogue and conversation that takes place. It's also allowing the employee to reflect on what that means to them and the role that they have and the role they might be wanting to move into.
(PRO02)

Tutors spoke of the importance of the VLE and whilst there have been efforts to build content and to increase us of the Microsoft 365 applications, there was a feeling that students were not happy with the VLE and that it could be more effective. PRO03 spoke of a VLE being any and all digital applications that together aid learning, and PRO06 suggested, in agreement with Price (2016), UCQ should be engaging social media facilities that students already use, rather than trying to get students to change what they use, to suit UCQ.

Assignments and contextualisation.

In discussion about UCQ's CMDA programme and whether it is sufficiently contextualized, some tutors (PRO01 & PRO05) believed it to be contextualized, whereas PRO02 believes that it is contextualizable and something that can be developed.

I think the advantage of the program is that there's sufficient flexibility within it to be able to flavor it contextually and almost any direction that is required. So the beauty of the program, one of the key selling points is, while there may be a generic framework, a scaffolding that exists, actually you can make that then become

contextually appropriate. Feedback from the student body clearly will influence that development. So I think that's a key component of the way in which the degree program develops over time. (PRO02)

In contrast, PRO03 believes the current programme is not sufficiently contextualized and should be redeveloped even if that means a revalidation exercise.

In my opinion it is not [sufficiently contextualized]. When I was at [redacted] we ran a more project based programme and that allowed for real contextualisation. Something for students to really get their teeth into and they could relate it back to their work. (PRO03)

PRO03 also voiced concern that the CMDA programme is broad and as such promotes the creation of generalists rather than specialists, where project based activities could also strengthen and deepen more specialist knowledge. EZI (2011) found that specialist managers are required for high growth in a business, they will excel in some areas and recognize their weaknesses and bring in others to address gaps.

5.4.1.4 Higher education approach

Entry, mobility and closure.

Staff believed that UCQ was open, transparent and inclusive in its admissions and this was clearly important to the staff interviewed. PRO03 suggested that UCQ does not sufficiently allow for APL / AEPL, which should be part of an HE WBL programme (Armsby & Helyer, 2016) and (from March 2019) has become an ESFA requirement on apprenticeships. Staff spoke of the challenges (a form of market closure) they had experienced when trying to establish UCQ as an HE provider, however there was discussion of the government removing barriers for new and alternative providers.

There was a sense that UCQ had embarked on programme delivery to support employers and learners, perhaps in that order and that social mobility is a consequence of the programme.

Policy tensions.

Staff voiced concerns over the 20% off-the-job requirement. PRO01 suggested that it was a barrier for some employers and that some providers were not even mentioning it. There was concern over the policy and the burden of collecting the right evidence, when a degree apprenticeship was inevitably going to require at least 20% off-the-job time.

There were suggestions that the ESFA promotes the apprenticeships as being employer led, when in fact it is the ESFA or the IfA (ultimately government) driving the programme through policy changes. One such change was the reduction in the maximum funding band for the CMDA which (in March 2019) dropped from £27,000 to £22,000 and which will be further reduced to account for APL.

Assessment methods.

Tutors felt that the assessment methods at UCQ are suited to the programme and that exams are not the best way to test work-based knowledge, nor are they as effective as observation for demonstration of skills. UCQ staff spoke of ongoing developments to measure changes in learner behaviours, however PRO01 expressed concern that, when asked to measure their existing skill and behaviours, some students measure their initial competence at 100%, only later do they realise that their level of comprehension was less than they thought; an example of the Dunning-Kruger effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).
PRO03 wants to see more project-based work in year two to better enable the learners to develop as HE students and managers.

Vocational.

Staff felt they have a good understanding of industry and this is one of the reasons they were recruited. PRO06 explained that whilst UCQ wanted to recruit staff with a clear track record in business, they could not teach if they did not have existing teaching experience and qualification, nor if they did not have a business qualification one level above the level at which they would be teaching.

Place based.

The general feeling amongst provider staff interviewed was that UCQ is not place based (PRO02, PRO03, PRO05 & PRO06) and that the idea of place-based institutions is not as relevant to national employers for degree apprenticeships.

I think [the idea of being of or for a place is] becoming less important.......if you are a national organization, you will normally contract your training overall with external providers who have a national delivery model. (PRO02)

There was a feeling that UCQ's location(s) are important for (office based) staff to travel to, but not so much for learners.

[....] I don't think [UCQ's location] matters; I've never had any negative feedback about the location, because we are going to their place of work anyway. So with technology, obviously [learners] can get in touch with [tutors and assessors] anytime they want. (PRO01)

There was also the suggestion that universities are changing too and becoming less place-based.

[...] I think, where [(redacted)] was for [(redacted)] and [(redacted)], I think that's all changed because of funding. So they've recruited lots of international students to try and fill the gaps. So I don't think it's definitely local as it was before. So I definitely think that's had a change. In terms of employers, I think they're just looking for the

best value for money and probably the organization that can customize or meet their needs. I don't think you have to be in a specific place, so if you've got staff who can travel who customize the program, then I think that's what the employer wants.

(PRO04)

There were suggestions that large employers might themselves apply to become universities

[….] some [large employers] have started applying [to become] a university […]. I think some [other] larger organizations may contemplate it. (PRO05)

Or otherwise almost become a part of an existing university.

*[….] the [*redacted*] center in [*redacted*], so they're working closely with the university on research and what have you. So [the major employer has] got their own suite of offices in [the university]. (PRO06)*

There was also an understanding that becoming a university would be very difficult.

However, sitting on this side of the fence as an academic, I think it's going to be very difficult for them to be able to do it because they're going to have to collaborate with (e.g. the OU) and they're going to have to understand the rules and regulations; they're going to have to have the staff that are qualified to deliver them. So I think [….] some organizations may contemplate it, however, I think once they find out about office of students and all the rest of it, it probably is too complicated for most employers to engage with. (PRO05)

There was evidence of some frustration amongst provider staff (PRO01 & PRO03) as they increasing adopted digital technologies to, in their opinion, improve accessibility for learners as they reimagined the use of space (Duviver 2019) , however they spoke of repeatedly needing to justify this to the validating body, who it was suggested, viewed learning more as social rather than an individual acquisition (Paechter, 2001).

Civicness.

There was a better understanding of the question around civicness amongst the provider staff, where four of the six interviewees had varying understanding of what it meant. In contrast with the learners and employers, who clearly had no interest in there being a civic or social return, some of the HE tutors felt it was important.

> *I'm very much the mindset that there should always be social return when there's public investment. And there is public investment within the whole apprenticeship funding model. So the answer is yes, it should be viewed publicly.* (PRO02)

> *I think [the social side and civic mindedness is] equally important [in the degree apprenticeship delivery] actually.* (PRO06)

Whilst PRO05 said there were more important things do deliver through a degree apprenticeship.

> *[….] it has to be more about skills than just the academic approach. We can't have these people that we're training who come out with knowledge but actually can't do the job at the end of the day.* (PRO05)

PRO03 appeared undecided.

> *I think that it is important that UCQ offers opportunities for enrichment both through curricula and social and civic activities. But we can't force it. It isn't part of the degree apprenticeship…..perhaps if we were delivering other programmes I might feel differently about it.* (PRO03)

There was an understanding that employers might not be looking for a civic return.

> *The difficulty is that from an employer perspective, it's money that's being taken off them, and therefore how do I maximize my return on the money that I've put into this ring-fenced pot? And that's my money. If I were the employer. So I might not be so*

inclined to consider that in terms of what is the social return that I should be evaluating or considering as part of the overall training. (PRO02)

5.5 Research question 3: What is the likely situation for a North East based alternative provider of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA)?

In order to answer this question, I have synthesized the findings within the literature with the employer, learner and provider interviews, focus groups and surveys.

The North Eastern region, consisting of the NELEP and Tees Valley (TVCA) areas, has five universities (not including the OU), two university centres (UCQ and Newcastle College), a further seventeen colleges of further education and hundreds of private training companies.

Early research undertaken by UVAC (2015) and UUK (2016) showed that nationally it was the post 92 universities that were engaging in Trailblazer degree apprenticeship delivery, with little involvement (if any) by members of the Russel Group. This was much the same in the North East, where the three post 1992's were the first to deliver degree apprenticeships; all three deliver the CMDA. In 2016 the CMI listed providers of the CMDA in the North East as the three universities, three FE colleges and one university centre (UCQ); this remains the same in 2019 (CMI, 2019).

Despite a long history of craft based and trade apprenticeships in the North East of England, the region now has the lowest number of apprentices in England. In the 17/18 academic year there were 23,000 North East starts (Powell, 2019), a drop of 33% from the previous year (ibid). The North East also has the lowest number of higher (and degree) apprentices in England. Attempts by the ESFA to prioritise this recruitment has so far been unsuccessful. UCQ cannot complete with the track record and breadth of knowledge and provision amongst the North East universities, but it

can compete if it is different and ultimately if it delivers what employers and learner need and want. UCQ should look outside of the geographical confines of Tyneside and the North East. This study finds clear indications that national employers are in some cases looking for parity of programme provision, which can mean having a national provider.

We at [redacted] look to establish relations with [providers] that want to work with us across the country. Boundaries are shifting and [providers] need to have the same sort of agility….Yes, they need to [deliver] nationally. (EMP04

64% of the learners surveyed said it was important to them that they attended a local institution. However, most of those learners do not attend a local institution, but rather a satellite facility provided by UCQ, which provided an indication that it is probably less important than the initial results showed. Picking this up at the final learner focus group revealed that learners see the satellite facility as being a local institution. More important to the learners was the delivery location (93%), with 43% saying that was very important.

The learners were almost equally divided in opinion on whether the type of provider was important to them. More important (93%) was that the provider understands their industry.

5.6 Overall – in conclusion

The results suggest there is dissonance between HE provider staff who are keen to support the wider development of students to include civic and social development (outside of the qualification) and to provide opportunities for subject enhancement, and the learners who are focused on their job and only what is required and counts towards the qualification. Similarly, the employers showed no real interest in civic development.

The learners were more concerned with where the sessions would take place, that the assignments would be contextualized and relevant to their work, and that the tutors understands their industry, than they were about they type of provider.

This study concurs with an earlier study (Mapletoft, 2017) in that degrees do not typically factor in ONA and TNA models as the vast majority of undergraduates undertake their qualification prior to starting a job. There is some suggestion from this study that (at least larger) employers are starting to formalize their requirements through competitive tendering and strategic planning. There is considerably more evidence of competitive tendering amongst public sector employers, who are governed by EU procurement rules.

5.7 Final discussion – a summary of key findings

RQ1: How does the learner (apprentice) experience compare with their expectation(s)?

A majority of apprentices stated that their employer should benefit financially from their undertaking the apprenticeship and equally though that they should achieve a financial benefit from their participation. A majority of apprentices were pleased that their employer was investing in them and their programme. The study found that measuring a financial return is difficult and that whilst there was agreement that value is not just financial, other forms of value (social and civic) can't be measured. Apprentices believed that their programme should be heavily contextualized but there was disagreement over whether the current programme is sufficiently contextualized, suggesting that UCQ should be clear and explicit in the degree to which their CMDA programme is contextualized. Learners on the whole had little understanding of 'civicness'.

RQ2: What are the delivery tensions faced by staff delivering the CMDA and how can they be overcome?

Programme contextualisation is very important to employers but can be challenging for the provider to undertake. Opinions differed however WBL tutors felt that the civic development of students was very important, whereas the employers and students did not. Operating with the multiple quality frameworks and the ESFA funding rules and regulations adds a layer of complexity to the delivery. The recording of off-the-job time for example, needs to be a shared responsibility of the tri-partite undertaken by the students, but supported by the provider and the employer. Employers appeared to be increasingly formalizing their training needs analysis, with delivery staff needing to get a better understanding of the employer needs, considering both employer and students as clients, and in a possible co-construction of knowledge.

RQ3: What is the likely situation for a North East based alternative provider of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA)?

National employers appear to want consistency of delivery nationally, which can be challenging for place-based deliverers, opening up the opportunity for an alternative provider who is willing and able to deliver a consistent programme across England. Learners were divided in opinion on whether the type of provider was important but a majority felt it was important that the provider understand their industry. Students want delivery to be close to their work location but this does not need to be the physical location of the provider.

5.8 Limitations and transferability

Engaging employers in research is notoriously difficult (Curran & Blackburn, 2001) despite how important it is that we understand them, so that we might support them. This study engaged with employers and learners from a small number of private market sectors and this does not mean that the results can be transferred to other market sectors or the public or voluntary sectors.

The researcher made numerous attempts both directly and via communities of practice including UVAC and CMI, but was unable to engage any other alternative

providers of HE in dialogue let alone research. This is understandable as there are few of them and the sector is highly competitive.

Transferability in this study relates to the likelihood of research results being able to be transferred to other similar providers. The (UCQ) provider staff are employed by UCQ and their responses indicated an institutional bias which may or may not be indicative of staff at other private, alternative providers.

The learners and employers had already chosen UCQ as a provider and so their responses in relation to the type of provider and the location of the institution and place(s) of delivery, cannot be taken as being representative of a national picture.

5.9 Evaluation of methods

The combination of methods provided a detailed picture of the research domains and a theoretical saturation enabling the research question to be answered and the research objectives to be met. The focus groups did not in themselves provide for the necessary depth of probative enquiry, they were nevertheless useful. The early focus groups provided some indication of the initial themes and areas to be explored, and the final focus groups provided both an opportunity for the researcher to explore some of the less certain findings in a group setting, and for participants to clarify their meaning following a reflection on their earlier responses.

The repeated refinement of the research instruments and the agonizing over the choice of themes being investigated meant there was at one point a lack of momentum; however, it also meant that the research became more focused.

Engaging employers was the most difficult aspect and led to an abandonment of the idea of an initial quantitative instrument. The interviews and focus groups provided sufficient data but a wider body of employers may have given a better picture of regional, size and sectoral differences.

Attempts to establish dialogue with other private degree apprenticeship providers (of which there are very few) with a view to involving them in the research, proved impossible due to the competitive nature and secrecy.

5.10 Researching as an insider

It was important to choose a stance (Titchen & Hobson, 2011) and to understand the issues that taking the stance might raise and to consider that whilst illuminating certain areas, others may have fallen into shadow (Trowler, 2016). Work-based learning is based around work (Helyer 2015a; Helyer, 2015b) and by its very nature, the researcher operates within, as an insider (Costley, Elliott, & Gibbs, 2010). In this study the researcher was operating as an insider and considers that whilst this may have an effect on objectivity, research undertaken by an outsider would not necessarily be more objective (Merton, 1972) and would likely be less informed. Insiders often have an understanding of the community and subject area, which would take an outsider longer to obtain (Watson, 2014).

The researcher was able to draw on his knowledge and experience of the community of practice and the subject area to help formulate the initial template coding and idea of areas requiring exploration. The researcher was aware of the differing relationships he had with participants, employers were fellow employers but also clients, students were fellow students but also customers of UCQ, staff are fellow staff members but also employed by the researcher. At times interviewees appeared guarded as if they wanted to answer in a way that would please the interviewer or would support a line of enquiry. The interviewer was aware of this and through reflecting in action, believes he was able to assure interviewees that it was their opinion that was important. The focus groups were not recorded and as a forum it was possible for participants to feel less guarded in giving their opinion to the interviewer, however there also appeared to be a guarding of some critical debate in an open forum.

Provider staff were keen to volunteer to be interviewed and whilst it was clear that there was some institutional bias, the range of different responses was encouraging

and helped illuminate areas of tension. The interviews were planned over a four-week period, however, in the event a good deal of time was spend preparing for the interviews to help ensure the interviewees were at ease and were spread over four months instead. As a strategy this is believed to have aided in the validity and reliability of the data collected.

5.11 Summary

In this chapter the findings of the qualitative research were synthesized with the qualitative results and the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2. The chapter has been grouped according to the research questions and then thematically against each code. The next chapter details the conclusions drawn from this research.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a thematic analysis of the qualitative data, synthesis with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and with the quantitative data findings presented in Chapter 4. This chapter includes the final conclusions drawn from this research, recommendations for further study, and an overview of the main contributions to practice and knowledge (see also portfolio section three and section four).

6.2 Study overview

This study has involved a critical review of the strategic and operational challenges faced by a Tyneside based alternative provider of HE WBL through degree apprenticeships. This has involved an exploration of degree apprenticeship policy developments (CMI, 2016; DBIS, 2015; DBIS, 2016a; DBIS, 2016c; HEFCE, 2017; HM Government, 2015a; Offord, 2016; Powell, 2019; Richard, 2012; SFA, 2016, UVAC, 2015, UUK, 2016), HE and university developments, and the place for vocational education (Barnett, 2010b; 2012; 2013; Busch, Bowker, & Edwards, 2017; Collini, 2012; 2018; McGettigan 2013; 2017a; 2017b; Molesworth et al., 2010; Wolf, 2016), the very idea of the university itself (Graham, 2008; Maskell & Robinson, 2002; Newman, 1852/2016; Peters and Barnett, 2018) HE WBL (Helyer, 2015a; 2015c; Ilott & Murphy, 1998; Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010) and the concept of 'value' in HE (Caplan, 2012; 2018; Wolf, 2002; 2011; 2016).

The research centered on UCQ as they wish to make a success of being a market disrupting challenger of alternative, HE WBL delivery.

6.3 Research conclusions

The aim of the research was to explore the tensions experienced by a North East alternative provider of the new degree apprenticeships, in order to make a positive impact on practice. The key conclusions grouped against the research objectives are as follows:

- RO1: A review of the literature on degree apprenticeships; Identification of the key issues for further research;

In this study, learners, employers and provider staff have all spoken about the importance of the programme being reviewed and evaluated (Kirkpatrick, 2006). It is important that there is value resulting from programme participation (EZI, 2011) but generally an acceptance that this is difficult to measure (Estrada & Connolly, 2015; Kinkaid and Gordick, 2003) and with Garavan (et al., 2019) suggesting the need for greater methodological rigor. 71% of students selected that their employer should achieve a financial return from the programme, however there was a feeling from employers that this may be more about changes in staff behaviour than a direct financial return,. There were differences of opinion as to who is the funder, with employers and learners suggesting that the employer is the funder, but some provider staff saw UK government as a funder or co-funder. Despite slight differences in opinion on whom should benefit the most (employer or learner), in concurrence with Caplan (2007; 2018), respondents believed that the funder(s) should be the ones who see a return, whether this is the student, the employer or the public.

There was a feeling amongst learners that UCQ could do more to recognise RPL in terms of accredited learning (Blackman, 2017) and experiential learning (Armsby & Helyer, 2016). This was also discussed by UCQ staff and there is work underway, however there was also acknowledgement by UCQ staff that some learners over estimated their level of competence, displaying the Dunning-Kruger effect (Dunning &

Kruger, 1999). Employers surveyed showed less interest in RPL than the learners and provider staff, even suggesting that there are benefits in learning refreshment.

Learners, employers and UCQ staff all spoke of the importance of the learning being contextualized and based around work (Helyer, 2015a), with 93% of learners selecting that it is important that the programme is aligned to the organisational needs. Some students raised concerns that the programme is not as contextualized as it could or should be, and there was disagreement amongst UCQ provider staff, with some suggesting the programme is heavily contextualized but the others suggested that the UCQ CMDA programme would benefit from redevelopment and a rethinking of the assessments.

- RO2: An investigation of provider staff experience in establishing and delivering a degree apprenticeship, comparison of the degree apprentice learner experience, assessing the importance and need for degree apprenticeship(s).

UCQ staff generally conveyed that they believe that UCQ is a different type of institution. It isn't a civic university, it isn't seen as part of the City, nor is it funded through the public purse. There was the suggestion that Newcastle City has a civic university and a former polytechnic, so UCQ needs to be something different, but that UCQ should look to operate beyond potential geographical restrictions. Employers spoke of the need for a national provider being more important than using place-based institutions (Doel, 2018), for their national delivery.

There was the suggestion by some learners that they felt that an apprenticeship should take more account of work they have already undertaken, whereas UCQ provider staff suggested that mode-2 knowledge is derived from practice and from learning as a result of doing, not evidence of the actual doing in itself (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, & Scott, 1994)

The student responders selected that they were not looking for a pay rise as a result of programme participation, however 43% said they would hope to receive a promotion, suggesting that to some it may be more important than they wish to admit.

It was evident that the VLE is an important part of the degree apprenticeship programme. This should not be seen as a one-time implementation, but rather as something that will change and develop as technologies and applications change, and as students and tutors change how they behave and communicate, such as using social media (Price, 2016).

- RO3: A detailed analysis of an alternative provider of a degree apprenticeship, exploring the strategic and tactical issues relating to delivery tensions, looking at how these tensions may be overcome in order to improve practice.

This objective was met through the primary research activity in addition to the work detailed in the portfolio (Section 4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4). One of the greatest challenges is that of the viability to establish delivery nationally. Providers might consider shared use of each other's facilities and even staffing, and there appears to be an opportunity for a landlord to set up HE multiple occupancy facilities to support this.

Some provider staff believe that the use of learning spaces needs to be reconsidered and that increasingly we will see the workplace as a place of higher learning. Rather than discounting the workplace as a possible place of HE, degree apprenticeship providers might consider how delivery might be possible through varied pedagogy and tools (Workman & Helyer, 2016).

Because the apprenticeship standard approval, withdrawal and funding rates are set by the IfA, neither the employers nor the provider staff believed that employers are really 'in the driving seat' regarding the apprenticeship standards. Changes to the availability and funding rates can have immediate and devastating consequences for providers, leading to feeling of insecurity and uncertainty. 71% of learners surveyed felt it was very important that their programme is funded through the Apprenticeship

Levy, suggesting that they would otherwise not have been able to undertake their programme of study.

The compulsory 20% off-the-job rule does create a tension, despite suggestions that degree apprentices will naturally spend at least 20% of their time engaged in off-the-job activity. Provider staff need to make sure there is clarity of understanding amongst the employers and learners prior to enrolment and then throughout the programme, and they need to support the recording of the activity.

Employers are heavily involved in selecting the programme and the provider, however provider staff expressed concern that the employers are not sufficiently engaged throughout the programme delivery. Suggestions to improve this include clarifying UCQ's expectations prior to the programme starting, running company mentor induction sessions, overseeing that mentoring process and looking to engage employer representatives in part of the programme delivery, as specialist speaker for example.

RO4: The development of a model that supports alternative HE providers to understand and address the main difficulties in establishing and delivering a degree apprenticeship, to positively affect practice.

This objective was met through establishing UCQ, from Quayside School of Higher Education, from Nimis Limited. The University Centre Quayside (UCQ) is a real-life working example of the model that has resulted from this research. The model is detailed in the portfolio (Section Three and Section Four), with some high-level points described here.

A provider must determine their own rationale for contemplating becoming an alternative provider of higher education and/or to deliver a degree apprenticeship, starting with a review of the sector and their own positioning (see portfolio section 2, 2.1). Review the capabilities of key staff, closing gaps in knowledge through development, formal qualifications and by joining communities of practice (see

portfolio section 2, 2.2); as individuals, staff are always becoming, never fully become (Gibbs, 2010).   Participation in pilot activity (see portfolio section 2, 2.3) and leading-edge discussions of developments (see portfolio section 2, 2.4).

The provider is likely to find it difficult to establish a partnership with an existing university and may need to reinvent itself and its identity (see portfolio section 3, 3.1). The partnership is crucial and should suit the needs of the students and employers, as well as the provider. A full gap analysis will identify shortcomings which must be addressed before proceeding with an application for institutional approval or programme validation (see portfolio section 3, 3.2).   The necessary organisation structure will need to be reviewed and likely be restructured (see portfolio section 3, 3.3), with a full governance infrastructure to ensure the organisation's policies and procedures are being followed (see portfolio section 3, 3.3).

Writing a degree programme can be challenging, it must meet the requirements set by the QAA (and preferably exceed thresholds), however a degree apprenticeship must also achieve the requirements of the apprenticeship standard (see portfolio section 3, 3.5). WBL must have a focus on the employer's business (i.e. it must be based around work and for the benefit of the business (Helyer, 2015a)), considering alternative assessment and possibly a new pedagogy (Workman & Helyer, 2016). This research found that both employers and apprentices must understand the needs of industry and maintain strong industrial links. It also makes the case for subject-based rather than place-based institutions

Creation of a strategic plan and underpinning targets is essential to ensure the staff understand the direction the organisation is headed in and how they should conduct themselves (see portfolio section 3, 3.6, and section 4, 4.2, 4.3). The marketing and positioning need to reflect not so much the current position of the provider, but its aspirational intent (see portfolio section 3, 3.7). This is for the benefit of potential students but also for staff, partners and other stakeholders.

Further organisational restructuring and key appointments must be made to facilitate the delivery of the strategic plan (see portfolio section 4, 4.4), monitored through critical self-reflection, monitoring and review (see portfolio section 4, 4.7) (Hardacre and Workman, 2010).

UCQ is successfully delivering the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship programme and its own BA (Hons) Professional Management degree (see portfolio section 3, 3.5) and has established itself as one of the few alternative providers of higher education delivering a degree apprenticeship. It continues to emerge, it has not, nor is it likely to ever, actually become (Barnett, 2012).

6.4 Recommendations for further research

Research studies, especially those involving the study of a case (Hayes, 2019), often illuminate areas for further investigation. I would suggest that this study has identified these are the key areas that warrant further investigation:

An exploration of RPL & RPEL activity for the CMDA involving large employers to establish good practice.

Investigate examples of programme contextualisation, again involving a major employer and learners.

Analyse and evaluate student retention on the CMDA and other degree apprenticeships at other institutions and guidelines for best practice to aid retention.

A study of the use of VLE facilities specifically to support degree apprenticeship delivery.

Investigate possible approaches to inter-institutional collaboration including sharing of staffing and location resources.

6.5 Contributions to practice and knowledge

This study makes a contribution to practice in the delivery of the CMDA degree apprenticeship and provides practitioners with an understanding of some of the tensions and difficulties experienced by an emerging alternative challenger university centre, at a time when alternative providers are being encouraged to invest in HE delivery and whilst degree apprenticeships are very much still in their infancy.

This study contributes to knowledge and understanding of learner, employer and provider opinion and how these are sometimes at variance. It provides suggestions which be of interest to alternative providers of HE and to degree apprenticeship providers.

The portfolio provides evidence of raising awareness of the issues this research has uncovered and addressed, to support alternative providers to establish themselves and to deliver WBL and a degree apprenticeship in particular. This latter contribution is likely to be of benefit to traditional HEIs also.

On this doctoral journey the researcher has made a number of contributions to the community of practice, including:

- Establishing UCQ as an alternative provider of higher education, a working example demonstrating the realities of not just what to do, but also the how (see portfolio section 3, 3.1,3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, section 4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7).
- Delivery of a specialist seminar on setting up and delivering the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship in Milton Keynes at The Open University Validated Partners conference (see portfolio section 4, 4.5).
- Participation in parliamentary debates on apprenticeship reforms and the Apprenticeship Levy (see portfolio section 2, 2.20).
- Numerous UCQ hosted committees, meetings, presentations and focus groups (see portfolio section 4, 4.10, 4.12, 4.18, 4.19).

- Delivery at the Sunderland University FBLT research conference "A critical review of the strategic and operational challenges in service delivery of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship by an alternative provider" (see portfolio section 4, 4.6, 4.20).
- Authored a paper which is currently under review entitled "The opportunities and challenges of an alternative provider of HE".
- Active participant on the leadership and management apprenticeship standards (authoring) Trailblazer development group (see portfolio section 2, 2.3, 2.17, 2.18. 2.19).

6.6 Strengths and weaknesses

This study is strengthened by the fact that it originates from within an alternative provider of higher education, it is about alternative provision of HE and is timely in that (in England) degree apprenticeships are still emerging and the apprenticeship levy is still new and uncertain. The responses have illuminated an interesting area of higher education work-based learning and it is likely that the findings will be of interest to the community of practice.

This study is weakened by the sample sizes, with employers being especially difficult to engage in the research. The researcher believes that further studies within and amongst employers will provide further insight into their behaviour, influences and expectations from HE WBL.

Choosing an area of study, the themes and variables to explore and illuminate, casts other areas into shadow (Trowler, 2016). It is therefore likely that, unintentionally, there will be omitted variable and omitted theme bias in this study.

6.7 Summary

This study has considered UCQ, the intrinsic case, an alternative provider of higher education as it has embarked on a Helyerian approach in the delivery of higher education work-based learning through a degree apprenticeship on Tyneside and across England. It has involved research amongst staff of the provider, employers and students, providing a comparison of their views and suggestions to overcome some of the tensions.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Interviewee Profiles

8.1.1 Employers

Sector	Interview Reference	Company size	Levy payer?
Education	EMP01	Small	No
Logistics	EMP02	Large	Yes
Services	EMP03	Small	No
Finance	EMP04	Large	Yes

Company size bands according to number of employees where: Micro is 1-9; small is 10-49; medium is 50-249; large is 250+

8.1.2 Learners / apprentices

Sector	Interview Reference	Gender
Education	LER01	Female
Education	LER02	Male
Health	LER03	Female
Health	LER04	Male
Services	LER05	Male
Education	LER06	Female

8.1.3 Provider staff

Role	Interview Reference	Gender
Assessor	PRO01	Female
Tutor	PRO02	Male
Tutor	PRO03	Male
Manager	PRO04	Female
Tutor	PRO05	Female
Governor	PRO06	Male

8.2 Questions & Questionnaires

The semi-structured interview designs were guided by Wengraf (2001). The research purpose determined the central research question, which was then informed by an area of theory, which in turn led to an area of interview questioning.

Category	Sub category	Theory area	Provider	Employer	Learner
Value	Payment in / Levy	The 10% investment / Levy – do they make a difference? (Gambin et al, 2016)	✓	✓	✓
	ROL	Does the employer have any evidence of a return-on-leadership development? (EZI, 2011)		✓	
	Needs mapping	Do they undertake a PDCA process (Hardacre and Workman, 2010)? Do they undertake a formal TNA / ONA? Is it an organisation-task person (OTP) model (McGhee and Thayer, 1961), or a performance analysis based approach?	✓	✓	✓

		(Bee & Bee, 1994) Do they use a training needs analyst (Peterson, 1992). Is there a calculation of the economic impact (Huerta, Audet, & Sabata, 2012).			
	ROI	Kirkpatrick-Phillips training evaluation model or other way to calculate a return or to evaluate the training programme?(Kirkpatrick, 2006) Does the source of funding influence the expectations of who should see a return on investment perception of the learner and the employer (Caplan, 2018; Caplan, 2007)	✔	✔	✔
	Lifelong learning	Has the individual been in life-long learning or if not, what were the barriers (Tough, 1983)			✔

Learner type and motivation	Recruitment and management	Recruitment (UVAC, 2015) and on-programme activity to take account of adult motivation (Helyer, 2015)	✓		
	Motivation	What are the learner's motivations for undertaking the programme? (Knowles, 1973/2015)			✓
	Ego	For existing learners, how much influence is there of ego and is the ego constructive or destructive (Peters, 2012; Gawdat, 2017)			✓
WBL	Delivery (tutor/lecturer) (assessed or examined)	Does the type of deliverer make a big difference (Helyer, 2015)	✓		✓
	Assignments and contextualisation	Relevance to work (Helyer, 2015; Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	✓	✓	✓
HE approach	Entry	Social closure and social mobility. Is social mobility an influencing factor for the provider, employer or learner (Blackman, 2017)	✓	✓	✓
	Policy tensions	Is the 20% off-the-job requirement a barrier to participation? (AELP, 2017)	✓	✓	✓
	Assessment method	Collaborative assessment vs inspectorial examined (Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	✓		✓

	Vocational	Does the deliverer need to maintain links with Industry (McGettigan, 2013)	✓	✓	
	Place-based	Of a place or for a place? (Doel, 2018)	✓	✓	✓

Category	Question	Rationale for inclusion in study
Value	The 10% investment / Levy – do they make a difference? (Gambin et al, 2016)	To try to determine the effect of a 10% co-investment against no investment. To ascertain whether learner, employer and providers believe that the Apprenticeship Levy is making a difference
	Does the employer have any evidence of a return-on-leadership development? (EZI, 2011)	Looking to establish if the employer has previously seen a return on investment in their leaders, or otherwise why they would choose to put participants on the CMDA
	Do they undertake a PDCA process (Hardacre and Workman, 2010)? Do they undertake a formal TNA / ONA? Is it an organisation-task person (OTP) model (McGhee and Thayer, 1961), or a performance analysis based approach? (Bee & Bee, 1994)	Is the training planned and reviewed? Has the levy impacted this or are they using the same process as before? Does the employer undertake formal needs mapping? Can an employee influence this process? Have they changed this due to the Levy? If the employer uses a TNA model, which is it and why? Does it depend on the size or sector of employer, or have the found one to be more effective?

	Do they use a training needs analyst (Peterson, 1992).	To find out who undertakes the training needs analysis. Is it the employer, the provider or someone else?
	Is there a calculation of the economic impact (Huerta, Audet, & Sabata, 2012).	The literature suggests that employers are looking for an economic return from every service. Is this true of their employee learning and if so, how can it be measured?
	Kirkpatrick-Phillips training evaluation model or other way to calculate a return or to evaluate the training programme?(Kirkpatrick, 2006)	Is the impact of training evaluated and if so, to which level? Is a return measured?
	Does the source of funding influence the expectations of who should see a return on investment perception of the learner and the employer (Caplan, 2018; Caplan, 2007)	I am looking to establish whether the perception is that the Apprenticeship Levy is a public or private source of funding and whether this has a bearing on the employer, the learner, and/or the provider.
Learner type and motivation	Has the individual been in life-long learning or if not, what were the barriers (Tough, 1983)	This is seeking to establish whether the learner considers themselves to have been and to continue to be on a life-long learning journey; also as a way of unpicking the

		barriers the learner has faced and how the degree apprenticeship may have overcome any of the barriers.
	Recruitment (UVAC, 2015) and on-programme activity to take account of adult motivation (Helyer, 2015)	Finding out how the employer and apprentice became aware of the CMDA programme and how effective the marketing and recruitment was. Was it truly a tri-partite arrangement? Does the on-programme activity suit the employed learner? How important was the choice of programme and provider to them? Does the learner consider the CMDA to be sufficiently contextualized to their employer?
	What are the learner's motivations for undertaking the programme? (Knowles, 1973/2015)	Which of the andragogic motivating factors are applicable and to what extent? Are all factors equally important?
	For existing learners, how much influence is there of ego and is the ego constructive or destructive (Peters, 2012; Gawdat, 2017)	To establish whether ego is a positive or negative influence and whether this depend on the learner's job position, prior qualifications. This may affect the learner on-programme retention.
WBL	Does the type of deliverer make a big difference (Helyer, 2015)	Do delivery staff consider themselves to be academics? Lecturers? Tutors? Facilitators? Does this change the way

		the deliverer behaves towards the students or the programme? How does this compare with what the learners believe them to be?
	Relevance to work (Helyer, 2015; Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	To ascertain the importance of work relevance to the learner and employer, and to explore whether this proves difficult for the deliverer.
HE approach	Social closure and social mobility. Is social mobility an influencing factor for the provider, employer or learner (Blackman, 2017)	To see how far the degree apprenticeships go towards furthering social mobility. Is this an influencing factor for the employer, for the provider, for the learner? Has the learner experienced difficulties trying to get into university before?
	Is the 20% off-the-job requirement a barrier to participation? (AELP, 2017)	The 20% off-the-job is seen as being a significant barrier for learners and their employers, and a challenge for providers to help record this. This question looks to compare the reality against the recorded literature. Is this stopping participation?
	Collaborative assessment vs inspectorial examined (Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	How effective are delivery staff at assessing rather than inspecting? Are some staff better than others, for

		example, are assessors different to lecturers, teachers, facilitators of learning?
	Does the deliverer need to maintain links with Industry (McGettigan, 2013)	To find out whether the provider has strong industrial links and how does the employer know? How important is this?
	Of a place or for a place? (Doel, 2018)	To determine if the delivery institution place-based. Does this influence the institution in which geography it focuses on? With national employers, how important is it that the institution is of-a-place or for-a-place? Is there a 'for-an industry' option?

Learner survey questionnaire

You are invited to participate in this research study which is expected to help higher education work-based learning providers to better understand and overcome some of the engagement and delivery tensions to support successful delivery of degree apprenticeships.

Please read the Participant Information Sheet before proceeding.

Part A – Before you start the survey:

1. Please conform that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and that you wish to proceed. (yes / no)

2. Are you currently or are you anticipating to start a chartered manager degree apprenticeship (yes / no)

Part B – about you

Gender (male / female)?

Age band (<25, 25-40, 41+)?

Is the sector you work in: banking; education; production; care; other service sector?

Who chose the degree apprenticeship, your employer, your leadership & management representative, your manager or yourself (employer / L&M representative / manager / self)?

Please indicate which of the following qualifications you already have (tick all that apply):

- Degree
- Apprenticeship
- NVQ
- CMI qualification

How much (if any) knowledge do you have of the apprenticeship reforms and the apprenticeship levy (please select one):

- Very significant knowledge
- Significant knowledge
- A little knowledge
- No knowledge

You have shown an interest in the chartered manager degree apprenticeship. Please can you indicate your main motivations? Select all that apply:

- To support my employer
- For a pay increase
- To improve my promotion prospects
- To change my job
- To achieve the degree qualification
- To improve my status in my sector by becoming a chartered manager
- To perform better as a manager / leader

Please select the most appropriate response to the following questions:

- 1 is Strongly disagree
- 2 is Disagree
- 3 is Moderately disagree
- 4 is Moderately agree
- 5 is Agree
- 6 is Strongly agree

Completing the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship will:

	Question	Answer (1 – 6)
B1	Help me to be a better manager	
B2	Help me to progress in my career	
B3	Benefit my employer	
B4	Enable me to be a better citizen	

Part C – Main questionnaire

Please indicate how important each of the following aspects are to you on a scale of 1 to 6, where:

- 1 is very unimportant
- 2 is moderately unimportant
- 3 is slightly unimportant
- 4 is slightly important
- 5 is moderately important
- 6 is very important

	Question	Answer (1 – 6)
C1	How important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding your programme?	
C2	How important is that your employer is investing in you and your programme of learning?	
C3	How important is it that your programme is periodically reviewed and actions taken to make modifications?	
C4	How important is it that your choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to your organisational needs?	
C5	How important is it that your choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to your personal development needs?	
C6	How important is it that your participation on the CMDA achieves a financial return for your employer?	
C7	How important is it that your participation on the CMDA achieves a financial return for you personally?	
C8	How important is it that training evaluation is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme?	
C9	How important is it that your provider is a private university centre?	
C10	How important is it that your provider understands your industry?	

C11	How important is it the choice of delivery location to you?	
C12	How important is achieving the qualifications?	
C13	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which takes account of work you do in your job?	
C14	How important is it that assignments and activities are based around your real work?	
C15	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which is assessed and not exam based?	
C16	How important is it that you attend a local institution?	

Provider survey questionnaire

You are invited to participate in this research study which is expected to help UCQ and other higher education work-based providers to better understand and overcome some of the engagement and delivery tensions to support successful delivery of degree apprenticeships.

Please read the Participant Information Sheet before proceeding.

Part A – Before you start the survey:

Please confirm that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and that you wish to proceed. (yes / no)

[participant can only continue if they selected "yes" to previous question]

Part B – about you

Is the area which best describes your area within UCQ: administration; management; governance; HE lecturing; HE assessing

How much (if any) knowledge do you have of the apprenticeship reforms and the apprenticeship levy (please select one):

- Very significant knowledge
- Significant knowledge
- A little knowledge
- No knowledge

Please select the most appropriate response to the following questions:

- 1 is Strongly disagree
- 2 is Disagree
- 3 is Moderately disagree
- 4 is Moderately agree
- 5 is Agree
- 6 is Strongly agree

Completing the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship will help students to:

	Question	Answer (1 – 6)
B1	Be a better managers	
B2	Progress in their careers	
B3	Benefit their employers	
B4	Be better citizens	

Part C – Main questionnaire

Please indicate how important each of the following aspects are to you on a scale of 1 to 6, where:

- 1 is very unimportant
- 2 is moderately unimportant
- 3 is slightly unimportant
- 4 is slightly important
- 5 is moderately important
- 6 is very important

	Question	Answer (1 – 6)
C1	How important is it that the Apprenticeship Levy is funding the CMDA programme?	
C2	How important is that employers are investing in the programme of learning?	

C3	How important is it that the programme is periodically reviewed and actions taken to make modifications?	
C4	How important is it that the choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to the organisational needs?	
C5	How important is it that the choice of being on the CMDA was aligned to the student's personal development needs?	
C6	How important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the employer?	
C7	How important is it that the CMDA achieves a financial return for the student personally?	
C8	How important is it that training evaluation is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the programme?	
C9	How important is it that the provider is a private university centre?	
C10	How important is it that the provider understands the student's industry?	
C11	How important is it the choice of delivery location to the students or employer?	
C12	How important is achieving the qualifications to students?	
C13	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which takes account of work students do in their job?	
C14	How important is it that assignments and activities are based around real work?	
C15	How important is it that this is an apprenticeship programme which is assessed and not exam based?	
C16	How important is where UCQ is based?	

Provider interview questions

You are invited to participate in this research study which is expected to help UCQ and other higher education work-based providers to better understand and overcome some of the engagement and delivery tensions to support successful delivery of degree apprenticeships.

Please read the Participant Information Sheet before proceeding.

Part A – Before you start the survey:

Please confirm that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and that you wish to proceed. (yes / no)

[participant can only continue if they selected "yes" to previous question]

Category	Question	Rationale for inclusion in study
Value	The 10% investment / Levy – do they make a difference? (Gambin et al, 2016)	To try to determine the effect of a 10% co-investment against no investment.

		To ascertain whether learner, employer and providers believe that the Apprenticeship Levy is making a difference
	Do they undertake a PDCA process (Hardacre and Workman, 2010)?	Is the training planned and reviewed? Has the levy impacted this or are they using the same process as before?
	Do they undertake a formal TNA / ONA?	Does the employer undertake formal needs mapping? Can an employee influence this process? Have they changed this due to the Levy?
	Is it an organisation-task person (OTP) model (McGhee and Thayer, 1961), or a performance analysis based approach? (Bee & Bee, 1994)	If the employer uses a TNA model, which is it and why? Does it depend on the size or sector of employer, or have the found one to be more effective?
	Do they use a training needs analyst (Peterson, 1992).	To find out who undertakes the training needs analysis. Is it the employer, the provider or someone else?
	Is there a calculation of the economic impact (Huerta, Audet, & Sabata, 2012).	

		The literature suggests that employers are looking for an economic return from every service. Is this true of their employee learning and if so, how can it be measured?
	Kirkpatrick-Phillips training evaluation model or other way to calculate a return or to evaluate the training programme?(Kirkpatrick, 2006)	Is the impact of training evaluated and if so, to which level? Is a return measured?
	Does the source of funding influence the expectations of who should see a return on investment perception of the learner and the employer (Caplan, 2018; Caplan, 2007)	I am looking to establish whether the perception is that the Apprenticeship Levy is a public or private source of funding and whether this has a bearing on the employer, the learner, and/or the provider.
Learner type and motivation	Recruitment (UVAC, 2015) and on-programme activity to take account of adult motivation (Helyer, 2015)	Finding out how the employer and apprentice became aware of the CMDA programme and how effective the marketing and recruitment was. Was it truly a tri-partite arrangement?

Does the on-programme activity suit the employed learner? How important was the choice of programme and |

		provider to them? Does the learner consider the CMDA to be sufficiently contextualized to their employer?
WBL	Does the type of deliverer make a big difference (Helyer, 2015)	Do delivery staff consider themselves to be academics? Lecturers? Tutors? Facilitators? Does this change the way the deliverer behaves towards the students or the programme? How does this compare with what the learners believe them to be?
	Relevance to work (Helyer, 2015; Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	To ascertain the importance of work relevance to the learner and employer, and to explore whether this proves difficult for the deliverer.
HE approach	Social closure and social mobility. Is social mobility an influencing factor for the provider, employer or learner (Blackman, 2017)	To see how far the degree apprenticeships go towards furthering social mobility. Is this an influencing factor for the employer, for the provider, for the learner? Has the learner experienced difficulties trying to get into university before?
	Is the 20% off-the-job requirement a barrier to participation? (AELP, 2017)	The 20% off-the-job is seen as being a significant barrier for learners and their employers, and a challenge for

		providers to help record this. This question looks to compare the reality against the recorded literature. Is this stopping participation?
	Collaborative assessment vs inspectorial examined (Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	How effective are delivery staff at assessing rather than inspecting? Are some staff better than others, for example, are assessors different to lecturers, teachers, facilitators of learning?
	Does the deliverer need to maintain links with Industry (McGettigan, 2013)	To find out whether the provider has strong industrial links and how does the employer know? How important is this?
	Of a place or for a place? (Doel, 2018)	To determine if the delivery institution place-based. Does this influence the institution in which geography it focuses on? With national employers, how important is it that the institution is of-a-place or for-a-place? Is there a 'for-an industry' option?

Employer interview questions

You are invited to participate in this research study which is expected to help UCQ and other higher education work-based providers to better understand and overcome some of the engagement and delivery tensions to support successful delivery of degree apprenticeships.

Please read the Participant Information Sheet before proceeding.

Part A – Before you start the survey:

Please confirm that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and that you wish to proceed. (yes / no)

[participant can only continue if they selected "yes" to previous question]

Category	Question	Rationale for inclusion in study
Value	The 10% investment / Levy – do they make a difference? (Gambin et al, 2016)	To try to determine the effect of a 10% co-investment against no investment. To ascertain whether learner, employer and providers believe that the Apprenticeship Levy is making a difference
	Does the employer have any evidence of a return-on-leadership development? (EZI, 2011)	Looking to establish if the employer has previously seen a return on investment in their leaders, or otherwise why they would choose to put participants on the CMDA
	Do they undertake a PDCA process (Hardacre and Workman, 2010)?	Is the training planned and reviewed? Has the levy impacted this or are they using the same process as before?
	Do they undertake a formal TNA / ONA?	Does the employer undertake formal needs mapping? Can an employee influence this process? Have they changed this due to the Levy?
	Is it an organisation-task person (OTP) model (McGhee and Thayer, 1961), or a performance analysis based approach? (Bee & Bee, 1994)	If the employer uses a TNA model, which is it and why? Does it depend on the size or sector of employer, or have the found one to be more effective?

	Do they use a training needs analyst (Peterson, 1992).	To find out who undertakes the training needs analysis. Is it the employer, the provider or someone else?
	Is there a calculation of the economic impact (Huerta, Audet, & Sabata, 2012).	The literature suggests that employers are looking for an economic return from every service. Is this true of their employee learning and if so, how can it be measured?
	Kirkpatrick-Phillips training evaluation model or other way to calculate a return or to evaluate the training programme?(Kirkpatrick, 2006)	Is the impact of training evaluated and if so, to which level? Is a return measured?
	Does the source of funding influence the expectations of who should see a return on investment perception of the learner and the employer (Caplan, 2018; Caplan, 2007)	I am looking to establish whether the perception is that the Apprenticeship Levy is a public or private source of funding and whether this has a bearing on the employer, the learner, and/or the provider.
WBL	Relevance to work (Helyer, 2015; Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	To ascertain the importance of work relevance to the learner and employer, and to explore whether this proves difficult for the deliverer.

HE approach	Social closure and social mobility. Is social mobility an influencing factor for the provider, employer or learner (Blackman, 2017)	To see how far the degree apprenticeships go towards furthering social mobility. Is this an influencing factor for the employer, for the provider, for the learner? Has the learner experienced difficulties trying to get into university before?
	Is the 20% off-the-job requirement a barrier to participation? (AELP, 2017)	The 20% off-the-job is seen as being a significant barrier for learners and their employers, and a challenge for providers to help record this. This question looks to compare the reality against the recorded literature. Is this stopping participation?
	Does the deliverer need to maintain links with Industry (McGettigan, 2013)	To find out whether the provider has strong industrial links and how does the employer know? How important is this?
	Of a place or for a place? (Doel, 2018)	To determine if the delivery institution place-based. Does this influence the institution in which geography it focuses on? With national employers, how important is it that the institution is of-a-place or for-a-place? Is there a 'for-an industry' option?

Learner interview questions

You are invited to participate in this research study which is expected to help UCQ and other higher education work-based providers to better understand and overcome some of the engagement and delivery tensions to support successful delivery of degree apprenticeships.

Please read the Participant Information Sheet before proceeding.

Part A – Before you start the survey:

Please confirm that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and that you wish to proceed. (yes / no)

[participant can only continue if they selected "yes" to previous question]

Category	Question	Rationale for inclusion in study
	The 10% investment / Levy – do they make a difference? (Gambin et al, 2016)	To try to determine the effect of a 10% co-investment against no investment. To ascertain whether learner, employer and providers believe that the Apprenticeship Levy is making a difference
Value	Do they undertake a PDCA process (Hardacre and Workman, 2010)? Do they undertake a formal TNA / ONA? Is it an organisation-task person (OTP) model (McGhee and Thayer, 1961), or a performance analysis based approach? (Bee & Bee, 1994) Do they use a training needs analyst (Peterson, 1992).	Is the training planned and reviewed? Has the levy impacted this or are they using the same process as before? Does the employer undertake formal needs mapping? Can an employee influence this process? Have they changed this due to the Levy? If the employer uses a TNA model, which is it and why? Does it depend on the size or sector of employer, or have the found one to be more effective?

		To find out who undertakes the training needs analysis. Is it the employer, the provider or someone else?
	Is there a calculation of the economic impact (Huerta, Audet, & Sabata, 2012).	The literature suggests that employers are looking for an economic return from every service. Is this true of their employee learning and if so, how can it be measured?
	Kirkpatrick-Phillips training evaluation model or other way to calculate a return or to evaluate the training programme?(Kirkpatrick, 2006)	Is the impact of training evaluated and if so, to which level? Is a return measured?
	Does the source of funding influence the expectations of who should see a return on investment perception of the learner and the employer (Caplan, 2018; Caplan, 2007)	I am looking to establish whether the perception is that the Apprenticeship Levy is a public or private source of funding and whether this has a bearing on the employer, the learner, and/or the provider.
Learner type and motivation	Has the individual been in life-long learning or if not, what were the barriers (Tough, 1983)	This is seeking to establish whether the learner considers themselves to have been and to continue to be on a life-long learning journey; also as a way of unpicking the

		barriers the learner has faced and how the degree apprenticeship may have overcome any of the barriers.
	What are the learner's motivations for undertaking the programme? (Knowles, 1973/2015)	Which of the andragogic motivating factors are applicable and to what extent? Are all factors equally important?
	For existing learners, how much influence is there of ego and is the ego constructive or destructive (Peters, 2012; Gawdat, 2017)	To establish whether ego is a positive or negative influence and whether this depend on the learner's job position, prior qualifications. This may affect the learner on-programme retention.
WBL	Does the type of deliverer make a big difference (Helyer, 2015)	Do delivery staff consider themselves to be academics? Lecturers? Tutors? Facilitators? Does this change the way the deliverer behaves towards the students or the programme? How does this compare with what the learners believe them to be?
	Relevance to work (Helyer, 2015; Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	To ascertain the importance of work relevance to the learner and employer, and to explore whether this proves difficult for the deliverer.

	Social closure and social mobility. Is social mobility an influencing factor for the provider, employer or learner (Blackman, 2017)	To see how far the degree apprenticeships go towards furthering social mobility. Is this an influencing factor for the employer, for the provider, for the learner? Has the learner experienced difficulties trying to get into university before?
HE approach	Is the 20% off-the-job requirement a barrier to participation? (AELP, 2017)	The 20% off-the-job is seen as being a significant barrier for learners and their employers, and a challenge for providers to help record this. This question looks to compare the reality against the recorded literature. Is this stopping participation?
	Collaborative assessment vs inspectorial examined (Roodhouse & Mumford, 2010)	How effective are delivery staff at assessing rather than inspecting? Are some staff better than others, for example, are assessors different to lecturers, teachers, facilitators of learning?
	Does the deliverer need to maintain links with Industry (McGettigan, 2013)	To find out whether the provider has strong industrial links and how does the employer know? How important is this?
	Of a place or for a place? (Doel, 2018)	To determine if the delivery institution place-based. Does this influence the institution in which geography it focuses on? With national employers, how important is it that the

		institution is of-a-place or for-a-place? Is there a 'for-an industry' option?

8.3 Interview transcripts

8.3.1 Provider interview transcripts

8.3.1.1 PRO01

Interviewer: So this is interview PRO01. So, PRO01, thank you for volunteering to take part in this interview.

PRO01:   That's fine.

Interviewer: I'm interviewing you as a provider of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, and I've got questions relating to the successful delivery of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship. So, first of all, can I just ask you - one of the things that I'm looking at is in terms of the value that employers and employees look to get from their participation on a degree apprenticeship. I'm just wondering if you have had any sort of feedback from employers regarding the 10% co-investment? Either if they're not a levy payer or if they don't have enough levy funds in their pot. I'm just wondering, has anybody said whether the 10% co-investment is something that would prevent them from starting a Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship or not?

PRO01:   No. There is no one mentioned anything that's related to that to me.

Interviewer: Do you think that this proposed reduction from 10% co-investment to 5% then, is going to make any difference?

PRO01: It's difficult to say, really, as no one has mentioned it to me. I mean 5% is obviously a lot less financially than 10%. So it possibly would make a difference. But see, I'm really only speculating, because like I've said, no one's actually ever said anything.

Interviewer: Yes. And a lot of this is about speculating because a lot of it is unknown and that's fine. I'm interested in your opinion and the fact that nobody has mentioned it is valuable in itself. (Mmhm) In terms of the apprenticeship levy, I mean are employers, or the employees with whom you work, are they... Do you get the impression that it's making a difference?

PRO01: It sometimes, I think, causes a few disagreements as to what the candidates want out to be 20%, and what the employees want out of 20%. I think some candidates, I'm not saying all by any stretch of the imagination, but something, it purely means they should get a day off work every week. The 20% doing their CMD award.

Interviewer: Yes. So just to clarify, you're talking about the off-the-job element.

PRO01: Yes.

Interviewer: I'm wondering just... I'd like to come back to that if I may. But, I'm just wondering in terms of the apprenticeship levy as a bonding pot. What your thoughts are as regards to the learners and employers, whether it's... Whether the students that are on the program, whether they would have undertaken the CMDA if there wasn't an apprenticeship levy? Or, do you think the apprenticeship levy is making a difference because you know, it is, it is leading them to participate on a degree program.

PRO01: 03:48 I do think it's making a massive difference. However, then you have the other side of it, where you've gotten non-levy payers, people there would also like to do, but because they're

not levy payers, financially they can't afford to do it. So I mean, it's an amazing opportunity for those who are levy payers.

Interviewer: 04:12 Do you think that the apprenticeship levy will be a success?

PRO01: 04:18 I do, yes, but I think it means that there's only people in large organizations who's going to really get the chance to undertake the award.

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

PRO01: Which then is not catering for, for differentiation, is it?

Interviewer: 04:32 No, no it's not. In terms of the sort of plan, do, check, act, process? And I'm thinking about how the training is planned and reviewed. Do you do see a difference? Are you aware of any difference between the kind of the planning and the review process as a result of this being an apprenticeship that is funded, and therefore subject to your public sector controls and monitoring? Do you see a difference in terms of employers having planned and also reviewing training that is being funded through the apprenticeship levy?

PRO01: 05:23 I don't really understand the question. Can you say it again? Sorry Interviewer.

Interviewer: 05:28 Yes. The one I'm wondering, PRO01 is, we're kind of, almost jumping in and taking for granted that you're delivering on the CMDA program. I'm just wondering if you've seen a difference between the planning process, where the organizations are planning out their training that is funded through the apprenticeship levy. And also, whether it has an impact on the... Whether you've seen any impact on the review process as opposed to, say, if they were just paying for the training.

PRO01:   06:06 I think there is more paperwork we do have to make sure is completed, as opposed to things like reviews, et cetera. Because it's an apprenticeship. You're governed by a lot more.

Interviewer: 06:26 Do you think that that will help employers to get a better handle on how the members of staff are performing on the program and also, potentially, how the program is delivering benefit to the employer?

PRO01:   06:44 Yes, as long as the employees actually buy-in to the program and we'll give their time and feedback, in complete things such as the reviews. It's a two-way process. And at the moment it seems to be more at our end than the employer's end. I think they're quite happy as long as they know the work's getting done, rather giving the time up to complete paperwork.

Interviewer: 07:10 I would infer from that, that this presumably is a different process then, to the process that employers were following before this program was publicly funded.

PRO01:   07:27 Yeah. This is very much of the, should we say the apprenticeship program arc, the levels, such as the two, the three, and the five. This is more in them lines than their traditional degree.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO01:   But it's the same issues arising regardless of the level of the employees not doing their bits, and just wanting everything done, should we say, ready for them.

Interviewer: 07:56 Have you seen evidence? And I'm thinking of, for example, an organization such as Santander. Have you seen evidence that

the employer has undertaken a formal needs mapping before putting employees on the program?

PRO01: 08:12 I haven't, but I have heard via the staff that the board's sort of interview process is... They were checking people were of the correct calibre and in the correct position to be able to undertake the award.

Interviewer: 08:28 If their checking the potential candidates' credentials, does not mean that the candidates have had some input in that process, have they put themselves forward, do you think?

PRO01: 08:42 Yes, they have put themselves forward. Right.

Interviewer: 08:45 Excellent. Thanks for that. Have the employers given any indication of whether they undertake training needs analysis themselves? Or via an HR department? Or whether they bring somebody else in to do that for them? Or has UCQ being involved in that process?

PRO01: Sorry. Can you repeat that again, Interviewer, please?

Interviewer: Certainly. So in terms of that training needs analysis that the employer has undertaken, have you seen evidence whether they do that internally, or have they done that in conjunction with UCQ as a provider? Or have UCQ undertaken that training needs analysis for the employer?

PRO01: 09:41 From what I've gathered. I'm not saying I'm 100 percent correct, but from what I can gather, it was done internally. Once they agreed that, they were going to complete awards with UCQ then they looked for the people they would like on the program. So, I think people had to put themselves forward, but then

Santander actually looked into their positions, into that ability, and possible room for growth before agreeing who was going on.

Interviewer: 10:12 Do you think there's scope for UCQ to help them with their training needs analysis in the future?

PRO01: 10:22 Yes. I do. But what I think might be beneficial - this is just my opinion - that there could also be a lower level award carried out as a stepping stone to help people to progress up to the CMDA.

Interviewer: 10:40 Yes, absolutely.

PRO01: 10:43 And I think that would be better for it. They have had, I think, level three in management done by other companies previously. But I think it would be good thing to do, where they were literally with the same company, and just stepping up.

Interviewer: 10:58 Yes, yes. I can see why you would say that. In terms of... I mean the literature suggests that employers who put employees, or who allow employees to go on the program such as this, that the employers are looking for an economic or financial return from every service that they undertake. Do you think that that's the case with employee learning?

PRO01: 11:31 I wouldn't say that would be the foremost reason. I think if they, shall we say, invest in their employees, the employees therefore will be more happy and want to stay and progress through the company. So in effect that's also financial gain for them, because they're not re-training other staff to come in.

Interviewer: 11:59 So in terms of measuring that, have any of the employers with whom you're working, have they given any indication of how they might measure a return on the training program?

PRO01:   12:13 No. I've had no indication of how that will be done except through the behavior records that we complete with them; to see if them behaviors improve?

Interviewer: 12:27 In terms of the apprenticeship levy itself, I'm looking to establish whether you personally perceive this as a public or a private source of funding?

PRO01:   12:42 I think it's, my opinion is, it's a private source.

Interviewer: 12:46 Yes. Do you think that that has a bearing on what the expectations are from the program? That it should have a return for the investor which would be the employer?

PRO01:   13:03 Yes. Possibly. Yeah.

Interviewer: 13:06 And I mean that as opposed to you know, potentially say a civic return that would benefit the public or the location. So, do you think it's more a case of looking at how the program adds value to the employer and the learner, would you say in that order? Employer first and learner second, or the other way around?

PRO01:   13:42 I think it depends on the company to be honest.

Interviewer: Okay.

PRO01:   Because I think some companies will put the employee, should we say, welfare, happiness, contentment, in the role first. So I do think that will be different across different companies.

Interviewer: 14:02 Yes. Okay. Thank you for that. Just onto a slightly different topic. I'm looking at the learner type and their motivation. And in terms of the CMDA program, I'm just wondering whether in terms of the marketing and awareness, who was involved in that; as an

example, at Santander. So I'm looking at was it a true tripartite between the members of staff or potential learners, the provider, in this case UCQ, and the employer. Or, do you think that the awareness of the program amongst the staff was more down to the employer or more down to UCQ?

PRO01:   14:57 I'm not quite sure on that one.

Interviewer: Okay.

PRO01:   So I would possibly say more down to the employer advertising it for the staff.

Interviewer: 15:10 And what about now that the program is running? Do you see the employer being as engaged in the process as UCQ, or do you think UCQ has taken a lead?

PRO01:   15:22 UCQ has taken the lead. I will definitely say that.

Interviewer: 15:29 Thanks for that. In terms of the on program activity itself, and the contextualization of work, I'm just wondering what your personal experience is and what feedback you're getting from students in terms of that? Is that contextualization important and if so, how important is it?

PRO01:   15:53 I'm getting really positive feedback from the students. I think that, really think that it will benefit them.

Interviewer: 16:05 And in terms of the time that they are spending on the program, do you think that that contextualization towards their employer and their job and their workplace, do you think it is important to maintain that?

PRO01:   16:23 Yeah. I do.

Interviewer: 16:26 Just a one for you there in terms of yourself. I'm wondering, do you see yourself more as an academic, or would you say more as a facilitator/tutor?

PRO01: 16:43 I would probably say a mixture of all, and I support staff as well. I think it's a bit of everything to be honest. I don't think my role is set in that is your role.

Interviewer: 17:01 But, in terms of comparison with say a more academic university, do you see sort of the delivery at UCQ? Do you see it more on the kind of... When I say the academic, in a way I mean theoretical, as opposed to more work based learning and applied. Which side of that spectrum do you see UCQ as being on?

PRO01: 17:35 I think we're more work-based, but I do believe that's how it should be, but there is sufficient academic in it to make it through a degree. And my personal opinion is, and I've lot of years experience, this is the most valuable degree and work-based learning course I've ever known, and I think it's going to be absolutely fabulous. I think it's worth... The vocational element is worth a lot more than a purely academic degree. A lot more.

Interviewer: 18:14 Right. In terms of that importance to the work. Do you think that if it wasn't a contextualized program and it was more theoretical, do you think that it would prevent people from either joining the program or do you think that it would be a tension for them when they were on the program, if it was less work relevant?

PRO01: 18:42 I think it would prevent as much of a take up on it. I think it is the vocational aspect what is beneficial for the learners and also because there's not the exams problem to worry about, it's based on their practice and what they can do, and it's developing those skills in that area.

Interviewer: 19:05 Do you think that's an important point? That it's not examined, that it is assessed?

PRO01: 19:10 I do. Yes. Yeah. Because, I'm not being funny, but some people have really excellent memories at facts and figures, and information. But then they're not able to put that into practice. And it's the practical element, what is the important one to benefit employers.

Interviewer: 19:33 Do you think that, moving onto that. Very good. That's a nice segway into the next, and the final sort of area of questioning. So do you think that as a result of what you're saying, do you think that it is encouraging people onto the program who would not undertake a traditional say, a traditional academic degree?

PRO01: 19:55 Definitely. I would definitely agree with that, yes.

Interviewer: 19:58 Do you think that, I mean there's a lot of talk amongst the kind of policy provided as a government. There's a lot of talk about social mobility. Do you know what I mean by that?

PRO01: 20:11 Yes.

Interviewer: 20:12 Do you think that this degree apprenticeship is furthering the social mobility agenda in any way?

PRO01: 20:20 I do. Yes. Because it is making a degree more achievable to more people.

Interviewer: 20:27 Do you think that's important or do you think it's a... Is it important or is it almost a by-product of the program? A happy accident?

PRO01: 20:37 No, I do think it's important. Personally, I think it should be available to all people, not just levy payers. That's just my own

personal opinion. Because that well help social mobility further. But, it is the best as what it can be at the moment.

Interviewer: 21:01 Do you know from the learners, from your learners, have any of them talked about experiencing difficulties getting into a university before?

PRO01:   21:12 No. I think it's just something what they've never thought they'd be able to achieve, because some people obviously have gone into a role at a lower level role and then working their way up in the company. And I mean, some of the learners... Sorry. Some of the learners, when I first met them, they were literally shaking with nerves and not believing that they would be capable of undertaking a degree. And yet the work they're doing in their role is fabulous. And I'm pleased to say they've passed the first assignment, and they're working hard on the next one, which is fantastic to see, and hopefully that will allay their nerves and they think, "Yes, I can do this, and I will achieve this award."

Interviewer: 22:00 Going back to the point that you made early on in terms of the 20% off-the-job element, is it a significant barrier for learners, and/or employers?

PRO01:   22:14 No. To be honest, I think when people hear the 20% off-the-job training it absolutely panics them. And employers might think, "Well, we can't afford to let staff off the floor, shall we say, one day a week." And then you have the employees who are saying, "Well I should have one day off. Because, it's 20%." But you learn in so many different areas being taken away from your task. I mean if you just think today, I've already done a learning task about Google Docs. You're constantly learning, and you do not need to have time away from your job to learn reflection. You sitting and reflecting on things what you're learning and that's all

time what adds up. Well, I think some people's just looking for their 20% off their job.

Interviewer: 23:09 Yes. Do you think then that it's a challenge for the provider to help to record that?

PRO01: 23:17 Yes. I think it's important that the provider clearly explains to employers and employees at the start, as an introduction. To be honest, if you're going in somewhere and you are going to mention and see how they feel about having degree apprenticeships, I think that is one of the primary things to discuss first. Because, I do think that 20% freaks people out. And if they have them fears allayed initially, then it's no longer a barrier.

Interviewer: 23:52 Thanks for that. I'm just wondering, and I think you've gone part way to answering this, but I'm just wondering ... there's, among some providers and members of staff at providers, there's more of what I would call an inspectorial approach as opposed to an assessed approach. Do you see yourself as working with the learners to help them to gather evidence? Or would you set them a task and expect them to do it, and then you inspect what they had produced?

PRO01: 24:30 No. I think an assessor should be helping them to develop. They should be there to say well, "Consider this. Consider that. Give us an example of how you've done this." Because sometimes the wording of things is so difficult that the learners don't understand. Now if things is broken down to them in, shall we say, layman's terms, they're like "Oh yes. I've done this. I've done that. I can show you this." And I think it is important that you can do that, because, not everyone is academic and can read academic criteria. So I think that's very important.

Interviewer: 25:09 Thanks for that. In terms of UCQ as a provider. I mean, do you think UCQ has strong links with industry? Do you think it has a good understanding of industry?

PRO01: 25:21 Yes. Yes. I do.

Interviewer: 25:23 Do you think that the employers with whom UCQ works know that?

PRO01: 25:32 Yes. I would say yes they do.

Interviewer: 25:35 I'm just wondering if you think it's important for employers. Do you think that kind of industrial links and relevance, whether it's something that employers are looking for from a degree apprenticeship program?

PRO01: 25:51 Sorry, I'm just having difficulty on how to answer that one. I think as we go into different industries, we're not always going to have set things we can use in each company, because I think different sectors are so different.

Interviewer: 26:15 Do you think that's something that UCQ needs to work on and develop?

PRO01: 26:19 Yes. For instance, should we say the behaviors review sheets with Santander, I think are very customer service focused and I don't think they're relevant for other companies. Which, I think is fine for them because of the behaviors but there is some things that if you're in that industry, that one is not relevant. And there should be a more specific one to that one. So I think as we expand, we always need to make sure that whatever we have is specific to that employer.

Interviewer: 26:59 And can I ask you one final question? Looking at what they refer to as place based. So if you look at traditionally universities

were, and polytechnics were both of place and for a place. So you know, Newcastle Polytechnic was, was both, you know, of and from Newcastle, based in Newcastle. But it was also there to support the Newcastle city and surrounding area, and that appears to have changed, or it appears to be in the process of changing as regards degree apprenticeships, in that, for example, you know we've talked about Santander, you know who they're a national company, they have staff all over England where the apprenticeship levy applies. So to an extent it makes it more difficult for Santander to always place students with a geographical place based institution because if they were to put students on a program at the University of Northumbria then it would be difficult logistically for the staff in Milton Keynes to attend.

Interviewer: 28:26 So It looks, almost, to me is if potentially there is change with the degree apprenticeships in that, you know, either the existing universities need to become national providers, or there is an opening for national providers such as UCQ. I'm just wondering if you've had any feedback from the employers or the learners about whether they really see that geographical location of the provider as being important. You know, whether they... I don't mean in terms of, necessarily, the delivery sessions, but I mean, for example, the main location of the provider. Does anybody giving an inkling of whether, in particular UCQ, whether it matters that UCQ is based in Newcastle, for example.

PRO01: 29:25 No, I don't think it matters; I've never had any negative feedback about the location, because we are going to their place of work anyway. So with technology, obviously they can get in touch with us anytime they want. My learners know, all they've got to do is send me an email saying, "Can I have a webinar with

you?" and I would arrange one as soon as. Which, if you were travelling to see people, that wouldn't always be the case.

Interviewer: 29:56 And are they using those facilities, PRO01?

PRO01: 29:59 Oh yes. But it means that the staff are more, should we say, approachable because they're easier to get in touch with. Where, I think at a university center, they wouldn't have that, shall we say, open, free, be able to access someone any time.

Interviewer: 30:24 Do you think that in terms of a higher education... This will be the last question. So in terms of higher ed. But it's just, I'd like to ask you this based on something you've said. Do you think that in terms of higher education, do you think that there's almost a move towards, I don't know if you've given it any thought, but towards the employers actually being almost a part of that higher education, or that university itself? What I'm asking is whether there's a potential change from, sort of place-based universities, towards almost as if higher education is taking place within an employer. So, you know, have you given any thought towards whether the employer is actually almost becoming a part of that university?

PRO01: 31:17 I've never really thought of it in that sense? But I do think you're correct. It is!

Interviewer: 31:22 Yes. It's just, it seems to me that if higher education is taking place, for example, within Santander, it's almost as if Santander, in partnership with UCQ, is becoming almost a virtual university in its own right.

PRO01: 31:40 Yes.

Interviewer: 31:45 Is there anything else that you want to say? I haven't got any more questions, PRO01, but is there anything else that you want to add?

PRO01: 31:54 No. Only that I think it's a brilliant program. Some brilliant providers.

Interviewer: 31:58 Excellent. Thank you very much.

PRO01: Okay. No problem.

Interviewer: Bye.

8.3.1.2 PRO02

Interviewer: This is Interview PRO02.

Interviewer: PRO02, first of all, I'm just gonna ask you about the employer co-investment for non-levy paying employers, but also for levy peers stats that use up their levy funds. So the co-invest is currently 10%, recently there was an announcement that said that for small employers, the ESFA/government is looking to reduce that to 5%. I'm just curious to know that if in your perception you think that reduction from 10% to 5% is likely to have much of an impact?

PRO02:   I think that it potentially has a positive impact. I think for small employers, 10% would be perceived as being quite substantial in light of investments and in training development, where it's sometimes difficult to be able to see the short and medium term impacts of that investment in training. I think that reducing it to 5% would create an almost, as I say potential, so that development to be seen as adding more value, rather than being it being something that's too long term and too developmental in terms of the development of their employees.

Interviewer: Do you think that there should be an employer co-investment, or would you prefer to go back to previous model where certainly for smaller companies it was removed altogether?

PRO02:   No, I think that co-investment is important, because that creates a buy-in from the organization. I think part of the difficulty that existed in the past has being around ownership of the program. Ultimately, it is the business, it is the organization that we're contracting with that benefits through the upskilling of their employees. Now, if there isn't an organizational buy-in to that, you don't get the holistic approach of employer, employee and delivering organizations. There have been, and we're aware of

this, numerous instances where the employer has a very, very distant input into the overall apprenticeship program, and really what you want is you want that tripartite...

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02:   arrangements.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02:   So financial incentive I think creates that buy-in.

Interviewer: Do you think that, have you noticed any difference in that sort of relationship as a result of the apprenticeship standards, which are, to an extent, employer-led, over the frameworks which were more sort of sector body-led?

PRO02:   Yes, I think so. I think that the idea that ... sector-led is not specific, and so any employer will want to see the what the tangible benefits are.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02:   And it was more intangible, I think, with the sector, because it wasn't specific, it wasn't detailed to the employer in question.

Interviewer: Yeah, and I think there's also an argument that sector-led, the sector support organizations were often awarding bodies in their own right, and they were certainly very keen to make sure that the frameworks included their qualifications, so there was certainly an argument that said that they were packaging their qualifications to fit, and I can seen why there have been changes with the standards. So that's interesting, thanks for that.

Interviewer: Do you think that in terms of the sort of employer engagement with apprenticeships; do you think the apprenticeship levy is making a difference?

PRO02: That's an interesting question. You would have expected so. You would have expected that any financial incentive to engage with apprenticeships by employers would have created an increase in apprenticeships, and I think the figures would suggest that it's still fairly static. And so that begs the question, has it had an impact? And perhaps it's too early to tell yet?

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: I think that we're still on that journey to full engagement.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02: And it would almost, I think the proof will be in eating the pudding, or in other words, the end results. So once you've got a quantity of apprentices coming through the apprenticeship levy and people talking about that more widely-

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: I think that's the point at which it will start to happen in time. It's just too early within that cycle.

Interviewer: I might come back to that in a minute and just ask about how that could be reviewed and could be measured, but before doing that ... just, in your opinion do you think that the apprenticeship levy is a positive thing or a negative thing, or are you agnostic about it?

PRO02: When it first came out, I was positive about it, because for all the reasons that you're getting employer engagement, you're getting potentially better employer buy-in, and increase the range of

employers that would be engaging with apprenticeships. So to begin with, the concept, the idea behind it seemed very sound, very promising. I'm less convinced as I go through because I just don't see that buy-in at this point in time. I don't see that broad range of employers taking a strategic view with regards to the way in which they use apprenticeships as part of their training and development portfolio.

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

Interviewer: In terms of, I'll ask you now about the sort of the planning and review process. So in terms of the plan, do, check, act the Demming process, there's a lot of literature that talks about employers who undertake the planning and the doing, but that often with training and staff development it's not then checked and reviewed and refined. And I just really, I'm exploring whether you think that the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and the funding of that, whether it's making any difference? Whether you've seen any difference, first of all in terms of the planning of apprenticeships?

PRO02: I don't think I have. I don't think at this stage it's (I'll go back to what I said earlier) I don't think it's being viewed as part of a strategic plan in developing workforce. And I think part of the difficulty is that it is such a long-term approach. And it's about an organization determining where they want to measure that impact. So...

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ could be working with employers to perhaps strengthen that?

PRO02: I think so. I think that part of the issue is that, and it's not a UCQ issue, it's the message around apprenticeships, and it being an effective pathway at all levels, hasn't been strongly, hasn't been

made strongly enough. And that's from a governmental level, that's from a sectoral level, and that's from an employer level. I think that there's no coherence in the message that's actually going out.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02: And actually, in many ways, there's a lot of conflicting messages that going out to young people and people who are wanting trained, and that confusion of message means that for a lot of employees, potential employees, they will revert back to what is safest.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: What has been done traditionally, and that isn't necessarily the best route that they could take.

Interviewer: I think that's a really interesting point that you've made there. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, in the idea, within the press, there are, within government, there's such conflicting messages aren't there? There's some people who support the higher-end degree apprenticeships, and there are other people who are very much against them, and it appears to me that the reason for being against them, there are two lines of argument than I've seen. One is people who say well, I have to go and get a £60,000 loan to get my degree, so why should kids today be able to do a degree and not have to pay? Not only not have to borrow £60,000, but also be rewarded by being in employment at the same time. There's one lady in particular on the nursing side who repeatedly makes that argument, which seems to be crackers to me, that she would do that, simply on that sort of personal basis.

Interviewer: And the other argument from government is that there are some people who, Ann Milton in particular. IIn an interview in FE Week, where I think she was slightly caught off guard after a speech that she'd given, and she, my interpretation is what she's saying is that the reason that she's not so supportive of the degree apprenticeships, are twofold. One reason is she hasn't got a degree, and look where I am today, and the second argument is that, and the main one, seems to be that she thinks that the amount of press, the positive press that the degree apprenticeships are getting, is detracting from her main apprenticeship aim, which is to support people on the lower level apprenticeships.

Interviewer: So you've got the Chartered Management Institute, who are actively promoting and getting success stories, not realizing is that that very message that they are getting out there is the one that could see government stop supporting the degree apprenticeships.

Interviewer: And these, yeah, absolutely what you're saying there, in these conflicting messages. And I'm sitting here wondering are the degree apprenticeships going to continue? Is it something that is gonna grow? And whereas, on the work-based learning side, there are some things, some arguments, that look at and think, well, it has got to be the right thing for some people who are employed and so on, or who are going to be employed as apprentices. But then, I guess for learners, you've got this conflicting message that they're getting from the press, where people are saying, well, we shouldn't be supporting managers, because managers, it's not a profession. And we shouldn't be funding high-end degree apprenticeships, because people can get a loan for those, and anyway they're not the key apprenticeships.

Interviewer: So yeah, I'm very much with you there. I'm talking a lot more than I should.

PRO02:   I think, I was going to say that, I think the other point, which is, it's a bit of a tangent to this, but you look at the devaluing of vocational qualifications within the educational framework.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02:   And you can logically make a very strong link between apprenticeship degree provision and vocational education, and you can then see why there might not be that push for the development of apprenticeship degrees because of the reluctance to promote vocational education, at all levels again. It's... yeah.

Interviewer: So Allison Wolfe, Professor Wolfe, who is behind both the, not necessarily the idea of the apprenticeship levy, but she was definitely tasked with helping to come up with the infrastructure to an extent. She actively supports what she would refer to as a bifurcation, a bifurcation of, and a clear distinction between vocational and academic degrees, and says well, there shouldn't be a parity of esteem, they should be seen as being very different. Not because she thinks, I'm not suggesting that she thinks that vocational isn't at the same level or isn't as valuable, what's she's actually saying is that it is just different. I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that? Do you think, there's a lot of a push to talk about parity of esteem, between vocational and academic degrees. Do you think that there is mileage in, just picking up on what you were saying about the vocational, do you think that they should be seen as being the same, or that we should actually clearly distinguish between them?

PRO02:   It depends on how you go about packaging that difference.

Interviewer: How would you package it?

PRO02:   Let me go back to what you asked first because, do I think that there is a difference, do I think there should be a parity of esteem. I'm not convinced that there should be. And the reason I say that is that I'm not entirely sure what an academic degree looks like, other than something that is very, very specific, PPE at Oxford, for example, would potentially be an academic degree. Everything else has got an element of vocational development within it, you would expect. However, I think if you take, if you kind take of an overview, I think the idea that where you're working and developing real skills in the workplace, that is a different animal from something that is more theoretical and outside of the workplace. So yes, I agree that there shouldn't be parity of esteem, because there are different, they are not the same.

PRO02:   How would you package that difference? Well, it depends on what the driver is. You can package that difference through a difference in level. You can package it in the sense that it takes a different amount of time to complete, or the components, or the requirements of those elements are different. You can package it in terms of financial package, whether that be through the levy or through some form of loans or grants. And then bear in mind that there is employer engagement within this, which there isn't within the majority of other degree provision.

PRO02:   I think the challenge of all of that then is, how do you create a system that values both products. So the parity of esteem only works where you've got equal recognition. And part of the problem we've got is that within work-based environments, that value, that equal respect I think is missing.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's interesting sort of looking at that - vocational versus academic, for want of better labels, it just goes back so far, goes back forever. it's always been there, and whether it will ever end or end up in a situation when it's not there, I don't know.

Interviewer: Do you see any changes within employers in terms of the review process, I think picking up on what you said earlier, it may be too early, but I'd still like to ask you that question. Do you see them reviewing the effects of the training/learning program?

PRO02: I think it's variable. I think you will find, certainly some employers, particularly where they're working with quite small cohorts, take actually quite strong use of to what's happening. It depends upon the size of the employer. Part of the difficulty you've got is where you've got employees who are co-located, who may well be working either together or within the same team; that's much easier for line managers and HR to be involved in the review and reflection of the program and the impact that it's having.

PRO02: I think where you've got more disparate teams or a collection of employees who are brought together in a room; that becomes more difficult because it's an individual as opposed to a collective. You can see changes in that collective that you might not see necessarily in an individual at the start or in the middle of the program. You would hopefully, obviously be able to see that changes as they get to the end of the program. But it's one as opposed to many.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, and I suppose really that's partly as a consequence of having a higher program, a degree apprenticeship program. It's not as if

you're in a manufacturing organization and 200 people on the shop floor all doing the same qualification, and then you might see a difference in productivity. Yeah, I can see what you're saying, that would be easier to gauge.

Interviewer: Do you see evidence of employers undertaking formal needs mapping, either organizational needs analysis or training needs analysis, before settling on the likes of the degree apprenticeship program?

PRO02: I think it's emerging.

Interviewer: Okay.

PRO02: I think it's emerging, I think that, again certainly with the larger employers, there's more consideration of what the organization needs in terms of the movement or upskilling their managers. S o there's that side of it. There's consideration of the impact that that training will have on the organization, whether that be improvements in efficiency or customer service or productivity or whatever, that element that they're wanting to measure. There are also internally within the organization itself, what is the culture, what is the impact, their improved professionalism has, and so I think there's that element. And then I think there's the third bit about what impact that actually has on the employee itself, and is that a driver for developing a cohort, so they are the new senior managers. So I think there's three elements to that.

Interviewer: Why do you think it's emerging?

PRO02: I think that there's probably a better understanding, as we're moving through the cycle, I think there's a better understanding of what the program can potentially offer. So, and again, with larger employers, there has to be a more strategic view taken of well if

we're engaging with this, what impact do we actually wanted it to have; how does that fit in with our existing strategic plans; what does that mean in terms of the teams that they're going to be involved with?

PRO02: So I think that it's a measurement that causes a better understanding; perhaps the conversation that's taking place is more about if you want to do this, it can have a range of different impacts, what impact do you want it to have?

Interviewer: Do you think that the fact that it is the length of program, just as you mentioned earlier the sort of length of program and the investment, I guess both in terms of the staff time as well as the actual monetary investment in the program. Do you think that has an impact and the level of the program on organizations looking at this, what that impact might be, and maybe spending more time on the needs analysis because of the increased investment in time and money and staff results?

PRO02: Yes, yes, I think so. There's little doubt that if you are committing employees to a three year + program, wither everything that's required for that to be successful both for the individual, for the team that will be supporting them, and for the employer, there has to be. The cost is not just the financial cost, it's everything else that goes around it. Not to take a strategic view of that is, I would suggest, not appropriate.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: I know we've seen certainly in terms of public sector engagement with apprenticeship programs, quite a lot of tender opportunities coming up. And those tender opportunities are, you can see looking at them, they are clearly, whether they've previously done it or not, I don't know, but they are clearly starting to look really at,

formally at their needs analysis and involving people in that process.

Interviewer: Do you have any view on whether employers undertake that needs analysis themselves, or do they bring in a needs ... like a training needs analyst, or did they involve UCQ in that process?

PRO02:   I don't have a specific view. My only concern when it's done by the employer is who actually undertakes it, particularly with large employers. I think with smaller employers, if they've got the capacity, and they've got the skills to be able to do it, their managers, then actually they're probably best placed to be able to turn around and say yes, this is where we're going and this is what we would need this cohort to be able to develop.

PRO02:   I think with larger employers it becomes more complex, because of the range of different functions that exist. And actually getting somebody external in, is I think beneficial, because it's very difficult for within a large organization to see all the strengths, and if you come in fresh and new, you're more likely to see greater opportunities.

Interviewer: Yeah, and maybe there's another argument, which is that when providers approach employers, which I've found increasingly they do, then the programs that the employer offers are the ones that providers have suggested to them. There's, yeah, there's a lot of evidence of that, as opposed to employers actively going out to see what is available. Whereas potentially an analyst might, because they're not specific to the company, it would almost as if it's in construction, it would be for example maybe an architect who has an understanding of a lot of different products that are available and isn't trying to sell a particular one.

Interviewer: Do you think that the employees, in particular on the chartered manager degree apprenticeship, do you think that the employees on the program form part of that needs analysis? Do you think they are inputting to that process, or that they're almost being dictated to be on the program?

PRO02: No, I think that there's, I think the advantage of the program is that there's sufficient flexibility within it to be able to flavor it contextually and almost any direction that is required. So the beauty of the program, one of the key selling points is, while there may be a generic framework, a scaffolding that exists, actually you can make that then become contextually appropriate. Feedback from the student body clearly will influence that development. So I think that's a key component of the way in which the degree program develops over time.

Interviewer: What about for you though, as someone who delivers on the program, is there a tension or a difficulty that is caused by that contextualization, as opposed to, for example, having a stock case study assignment that everybody, regardless of which sector they're in, does the same case study. I'm just wondering, does it give you more work to do, and both in terms of the actual teaching, but also more so on the marking side, that there is that contextualization.

PRO02: It doesn't give an issue with regards to the marking. Marking is marking. Contextualized assignments of really what you're looking for, because that allows the candidate, the student, the opportunity to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in situations which they are actually delivering that particular skill or experience. Yes, it will increase workload, because you need to be able to be specific with this. voluntary sector, care sector, whatever the sector might be. But that's part

of the program. I think that's part of the experience that both the employer, actually for everybody would want. The employer would want that contextualized, the employee is going to gain more if it is contextualized.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: And as a provider, as a deliverer, you want the activities, you want the content to be as engaging and relevant as possible, so my view would be that's actually good teaching.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02: So...

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: Erm ....

Interviewer: Okay.

PRO02: Yeah.

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

Interviewer: The literature suggests that employers are looking for a financial return, the economic literature certainly, that they're looking for financial return for everything they do. Do you think that's true of employee learning?

PRO02: Not necessarily. Yes, an employer will want to be able to turn around and say yes, this investment has made a difference in X, Y, and Z, and therefore we are more efficient, more productive, more whatever it might be - what the metric is for measuring that. But actually I think that as I mentioned elements, there are elements that are intrinsic in terms of organizational culture-

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: And that is something which is much more ... you can have the measurement of staff turnover, illness etc., but actually where you get that buoyancy, and you have that buy-in and everybody's working towards the right goals, working effectively, that actually is more difficult to measure than most organizations recognize that that's important.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: So, it's not necessarily a direct financial measurement that's necessarily-

Interviewer: No.

PRO02: It's quite often the staff satisfaction aspect.

Interviewer: It's quite a difficult one to measure, though, isn't it, the behaviors,? Yes a key part of the apprenticeship standards, but again it's hard sometimes hard to measure, isn't it?

PRO02: It is very difficult to measure, and therein lies part of the difficulty, no, I'm saying that difficulty's the problem but, it's how do you package that bit within the overall context of ... this is a program that will allow, and organizations will be able to move, and move forward, you will also have improvements in culture, in staff relationships, and so on and so forth, but that's not necessarily got financial. You can't put a pound sign next to it.

Interviewer: No, no, you can't.

Interviewer: I'm just curious to know in terms of your perception, whether you perceive the apprenticeship levy as being predominantly a public or a private source of funding?

PRO02:   I would say it's a mixture. I wouldn't say it's one or the other. I think ... if you take a very...

PRO02:   That's a very good question to answer.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02:   My personal view is it should be a public source, because it's benefiting, it's upgrading, developing a range of individuals to actually be able to be more effective, and there's a social good that goes with that.

Interviewer: That's, that's yes, and that's really at the heart of why I'm asking it. Whether there should a social or a civic return from the program, or if it's seen as a predominantly private source of funding, that money's taken off of employers, it's putting it into their digital account, that they can then draw the money to spend on training, and it's this, yeah, that's exactly what I'm exploring is whether the perception on the source of funding impacts on whether you think there should be a civic or an employer-focused return.

PRO02:   I'm very much the mindset that there should always be social return when there's public investment.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02:   And there is public investment within-

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02:   The whole apprenticeship funding model. So the answer is yes, it should be viewed publicly. The difficulty is that from an employer perspective, it's money that's being taken off them, and therefore

how do I maximize my return on the money that I've put into this ring-fenced pot? And that's my money.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: If I were the employer. So I might not be so inclined to consider that in terms of what is the social return that I should be evaluating or considering as part of the overall training.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: It's interesting because I've noticed that within the provider interviews there's an understanding, and dialogue around social and civic importance from the funding, whereas amongst the employer interviews, there seems to be confusion as to even what the question is. Not only do they not even think about a civic and social return, it's so far off the radar they don't even understand the question and why on earth would you be asking that. And then amongst students it seems to be again off the radar. But, no, thanks for that.

Interviewer: Yep, you talked about the tripartite arrangement, so I'm not going to ask so much about that in terms of the actual program activity, but I'm curious to know ... you said about the importance of the contextualization, and as things stand with the UCQ CMDA program, I'm wondering whether you see the on-program activity as suiting employed learners, who are full time employed. Or are there tensions, are there difficulties? I would imagine there will be some, but I'm just kind of asking, do you think that a degree apprenticeship is a suitable program for an employed learner?

PRO02: Yeah, I think so, I think so. I think that the skills and knowledge that the employee gain, can have a serious impact on their effectiveness and development, so that there are real returns that

the employee gains from engaging with the program. I think the challenge comes from an employer perspective, making sure that the employee has the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to engage with the program. Not from day one, but has the capacity to be able to effectively engage in the program. So I think that's one issue that needs to be considered. I think that the employee needs to be effectively supported, because there is quite a reasonable demand in terms of additional work that the student has to undertake, both to be able to complete the degree program itself, but also the reflective reviews, and so on and so forth. And so there's support there that needs to be given, and the employee needs to understand what that means in terms of time.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: I've noticed that you talk a lot about the employees, is that, as opposed to the employers, do you see yourself as being sort of student-focused rather than employer-focused? Is that a fair thing to say?

PRO02: Probably. My engagement is with the employees.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02: So I have very, very little engagement with the employers. It would always be indirect. So the conversations that I have, in terms of either content or delivery, is very much focused on where the employees are.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: Clearly if there are requirements that need to be developed from the employer, that would come down to me, and we would need them to be able to-

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02: ...input that into the program.

Interviewer: Yes, thank you.

Interviewer: I'm curious to know whether you consider yourself to be, well, certainly within your UCQ role, do you consider it to be more of, what I would say is sort of an academic or lecturing role, or more of a tutoring role?

PRO02: More of a tutoring role, definitely.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: I think if it was academic and more... academic tends to be more, I'm generalizing, but it tends to be more one-directional. Tutoring is more ... and so it's, it's much more of this is theoretical content and discussing the academic direction of a particular concept.

PRO02: Tutoring is much more about, I think, changing that from the academic to the practical application of an academic concept or an academic piece of research. And it's more two-way dialogue and conversation that takes place. It's also allowing the employee to reflect on what that means to them and the role that they have and the role they might be wanting to move into.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02: So there's, I think the academic doesn't take those more personalized elements further.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yes.

PRO02: Which is a fundamental difference between an academic program and a more vocation-focused program.

Interviewer: Thank you for that.

Interviewer: I'm just ... do you personally see the degree apprenticeship as furthering social mobility?

PRO02:   It will only further social mobility if there is a sufficiency of candidates going through. I think it has great potential for creating social mobility. Because we put, our society puts a value on a degree that is, I would suggest, slightly out of kilter in terms of the real value that it has. And coming back to the point you made earlier there are a large number of very, very successful people who do not have academic degrees, who never studied a degree. However, we've had this aspiration, no longer, but have this aspiration of 50%-

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02:   Graduate ...ness within our workforce funds, and so things are out of balance there.

Interviewer: Yeah, It's difficult isn't it, because the economists, again, sort of Allison Wolfe, and also Kaplan and others in America, they look at, and they determine the value of a degree by the job that somebody with that degree gets. But there's very much a difference. Yes, you couldn't become a surgeon without a degree. However, you can become a manager without a degree, in fact most managers don't have a degree, certainly not in management. So it is harder to determine, and it's harder to work out what that's, so yes, I agree, it is difficult to determine what that value looks like.

Interviewer: In terms of the off-the-job element, do you, have you any experience ... are people talking about that? Are the learners? Is

it a barrier, is it a tension, or are they getting the 20% off-the-job that they want or need?

PRO02: I think there has been some tension in understanding what the 20% comprises of. And I think that there's a better explanation, and therefore a better understanding of what the off-the-job components actually are. I think for some of the students to begin with, they saw it as being so stand-alone that it was, and so separate from everything, that is was quite a substantial barrier, on top of their work and the degree itself, and that off-the-job, that then seemed quite daunting. I think the explanation of how it fits in to the overall program and the activities that they can do, the contributes of the job, I think is making it less of an issue, and the explanations that have been occurring, certainly with the new cohorts ,is making it much less of a daunting process.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02: So yeah.

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ has strong industrial links, strong links with employers?

PRO02: I think generally yes.

Interviewer: Do you think it's important for, in terms of program, do you think it's important for employers?

PRO02: I think it might be important for some employers. I think that some employers will base the credibility of the program on the strength of the employer links, because that validates the program, in their perception.

PRO02: I think for others, the value of the program itself is actually sufficient if it's meeting their specific needs. So it really depends upon the direction that the employer's coming from. Is this program that will strengthen the managerial skills, and there's credibility because it's supported by specific employers, or it's got viable industrial links. Or is it actually a need that is required, and that's a strategic decision that's taken,. That might not need such strong industrial linkages.

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

Interviewer: On, and it's my final questions, thanks for your patience, my final question is around place-based institutions. So both, I guess with all, probably all the universities and certainly polytechnics as well, tended to be thought of as both of a place and for a place, that they, are based, for example, within Newcastle. Say take Newcastle Polytechnic, Northumbrian University now, that it is based within Newcastle, but also that it, partly from a civic perspective, but also social and industrial, that it is to support the area. And I'm just exploring whether, with the implementation of the apprenticeship levy, large national employers are now putting members of staff onto programs.

Interviewer: For example, Santander, how that fits? Whether Santander would even care whether they have Newcastle students on a program with a Newcastle provider and they have members of staff in Leicester, with Leicester? Or whether that sort of place-based focus goes away as a result of the fact that they're going to put members of staff on a program and they can't put them all on local programs with one provider because providers either need to become national providers, in which case they're no longer really of a place and for a place, or they go with an alternative provider, I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that?

PRO02: I think it's becoming less important. And the reason I say that is mainly what you've articulated, And, in as much as, if you are a national organization, you will normally contract your training overall with external providers who have a national delivery model. So if you take the degree apprenticeship program as an extension of that training requirement, as part of that continuum, then in many ways it's who can best deliver for the model that I need for the employees that I want to be able to put through that training.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02: And for that I would suggest that location, a static location, serving a particular geographical population becomes less important.

PRO02: I would then turn round and say that it can be really important for small and medium employers within a region because their view will be "I"m located within this region".

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02: "I want to have somebody who is local to me, who understands the nuances that exist regionally or within the area, and who I can develop a much stronger working relationship with."

PRO02: So nationally, not so important. And I think that the evidence suggests that people tend to contract with whoever can provide the best service. Regionally, I think it becomes much more important for the SME sector. So there's tension there.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely, it's interesting.

PRO02: And in many ways, it depends upon how the organization wants to grow. Because if it's kind of organic growth, that locality might be important. If it's quite substantial growth, the geographical

location actually becomes less important, because, I would suggest, thatthe increase in nationally-based organizations would drive the growth in a way that makes location much less important.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: So my final part of this question is if we've got the large national employers and we've certainly seen with Santander that the learning is taking place within Santander, that's their choice. So what I'm wondering is whether there is potentially a change within higher education, if we're saying that providers will be national, then they're going to be different. Either the existing universities need to become something different to what they currently are, or new providers will take that up, and become essentially your higher education institutions in themselves. And we're seeing evidence of that, and we're seeing that being supported by government.

Interviewer: What I'm interested to kind of just ask the last bit around, is that this idea of sort of certainly Newman's idea about higher education, in that the higher means the transcendence, that the student achieves a higher level of understanding. And what I'm curious to know is whether you see potentially in the future that the companies, the employers, actually become a part of that university or that higher education institute?

Interviewer: Or experience, not necessarily the actual company or institute, but they essentially become that place of learning that was traditionally a formal campus in a particular area, but do you think that it's potentially changing?

PRO02: Yes, yes, yeah.

PRO02:   Yes I think it is. I think it's something you alluded to and I think it's about the change from delivery being very campus-based to the development and the increase in a range of different providers providing this type of program. My view is this, that actual, traditional universities will never be able to engage with this type of program effectively, because they don't - I don't think they have the delivery models, they don't have the instruction, they don't have the delivery models which actually best suits degree apprenticeship delivery.

PRO02:   With that then comes, if you've got the quantity of CMDA students potentially coming through, why would you not then develop a kind of wrap-around program with an employer that makes that program sustainable, developmental, and make it much more focused on their premises and their sites.

Interviewer: The argument against it is that an employer, a company is no place for higher education. It's almost as if by osmosis the knowledge is gained within the university campus, but then of course is a counterargument, which is that the same happens within a company.

Interviewer: I'm just wondering, do you see the employer, the companies as an appropriate place of higher education and learning.

PRO02:   I think, my personal view is that you can make any place a place of higher education, you just have to develop the right attitude, culture, behaviors, and expectations. And ensure that you've got the right resources in place to be able to support that. But as we move further and further towards a digital environment. In contrast, we have seen the expansion of higher education within further education environments, now it would be very easy to

argue that further education is not a place for higher education, and yet that has been a major success.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO02:   So it seems reasonable to me-

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02:   To think that an employer can become - and you look at certain industries - high value engineering, they're more or less operating as ....

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO02:   As higher educational institutions in their own right.

Interviewer: Yes. Thanks for that.

Interviewer: I've asked all the questions I want to ask. Is there anything that you think I should have asked or that you want to add?

PRO02:   I don't think so.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

PRO02:   It's been very comprehensive.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

8.3.1.3 PRO03

Interviewer: This is interview PRO03. PRO03, the first question I'm going to ask you is what your thoughts are regarding employer co-investment. This is more in relation to smaller, non-levy paying organizations and also organizations that pay the levy that run out of funds. Recently the announcement was that, that 10% co-investment is going to be reduced to 5% for smaller employers. Do you think that's going to make much difference to take up?

PRO03: I think it will make a difference in smaller companies but I wouldn't want to have to quantify that statement, because I can't really.

Interviewer: Do you think that there should be a co-investment by the employer, outside of their levy funds? Or if they haven't got a levy account? Or do you think it should be abolished altogether

PRO03: There is evidence to suggest that employers feel they should make a contribution. It means they take ownership of their employee development. There are cases where it leads to knowledge co-creation.

Interviewer: Do you think that the apprenticeship levy is making a difference?

PRO03: I think it is making a difference. Certainly with degree apprenticeships and the take up of leadership and management programmes. But it also leads to market distortion. It is hard to know whether we are seeing new learners, or simply learners that would have undertaken either another management course or a traditional degree. If they were not on a degree apprenticeship.

Interviewer: In terms of the Deming plan, do, check, act process there's, the literature suggests that employers are more likely to be undertaking planning and doing, and that they don't always

actually check and review what has been done. I'm just wondering whether you think that and do you think that the levy as a funding source, is making any difference to the planning activity that organizations are undertaking?

PRO03:   I think the issue of neglecting to check and act is one that cuts across all industries. We see that a lot in IT areas. What was the second question again?

Interviewer: Do you think that the levy as a funding source, is making any difference to the planning activity that organizations are undertaking?

PRO03:   I wouldn't be surprised if it is. Companies need to plan what they do with their Levy and the longer-term programmes require careful thought.   If I'm going to have my manager out of the business a day a week for three or four years, I need to ensure contingency.

Interviewer: Do you see employers undertaking formal needs analysis to work out the relevancy of the program to an individual, or to ascertain an individual's training needs, and then to map that to a potential program. Do you see that happening?

PRO03:   Large companies tend to be better at analyzing their needs, and quite rightly so. They are more likely to undertake strategic planning, and the analysis is derived from that process.

Interviewer: Where the organizations undertake the training needs analysis, in your experience, do the employers undertake that analysis themselves, internally? Or have you witnessed them using a training needs analysis from outside of the company, or indeed the provider? For example, UCQ being involved, or undertaking that process?

PRO03: I think it's something they do themselves or they do in conjunction with a provider, there's not much evidence of companies, well, not in the UK anyway, using an analyst.

Interviewer: Thank you. The literature suggests that employers are looking for a financial return for everything that they invest in, which would include employee development. I'm just wondering if that is your experience? And if it is, how employers can measure that?

PRO03: Ah, there's a tough question. Value takes many forms, not just financial, the employer needs to derive some value from their investment.

Interviewer: Yes, I agree, but specifically do you think that employers are seeking to derive a financial return on their investment?

PRO03: It's unlikely an employer would not be looking for a financial return, but quantifying that return is a difficult thing to do.

Interviewer: In terms of training itself, and in terms of how it's evaluated. have you seen any evidence of how companies can evaluate the impact of training? Do you think they can measure it?

PRO03: Yes they can measure it, both in terms of the individual's performance and the organizational performance, they just often don't. The longer the duration, the harder it is to be confident that it was the programme that made the difference.

Interviewer: In your opinion, is the apprenticeship levy a private source of funding or is it a public fund?

PRO03: I think it is a mixture of private and public funding. I think employers see it as theirs, so private and the tax man will see it as public.

Interviewer: Okay, so putting you on the spot. If you had to choose. Is the Apprenticeship Levy a private or a public source of funding?

PRO03: Private.

Interviewer: Do you think that that makes a difference in terms of what the expectations are? What your expectations are, and what employer expectations, and learner expectation are, in terms of who should benefit from the funding? Whether the programme should benefit the employer, if it's a private fund, as opposed to benefiting the wider society?

PRO03: Yes. It is natural that the one funding the programme is going to want to benefit in some way. That might not be a fiscal benefit.

Interviewer: Do you think it is important that work based learners develop their civicness.

PRO03: I do yes. And we as educators must support that sides of their development too.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO03: I think that it is important that UCQ offers opportunities for enrichment both through curricula and social and civic activities. But we can't force it. It isn't part of the degree apprenticeship as such, not part of the standard. Perhaps if we were delivering other programmes I might feel differently about it

Interviewer: In terms of awareness of the program, and in particular the idea that there needs to be a tripartite between the provider, the employer, and the learner. I'm just wondering if you think that UCQ is developing and maintaining those tripartite arrangements effectively?

PRO03: I think so but my involvement is with the students, not their employers. The mentors aren't as engaged as they could be.

Interviewer: Great. Do you think that the on-program activity is suited towards learners who are employed full time?

PRO03: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ's CMDA program is sufficiently contextualized to employers? Do you think it's over contextualized? Or under contextualized?

PRO03: In my opinion it is not . When I was at [another university] we ran a more project based programme and that allowed for real contextualisation. Something for students to really get their teeth into and they could relate it back to their work.

Interviewer: So you think UCQ could do more to contextualize their programme?

PRO03: Yes I do but that is being addressed. We also need to be better at recognizing existing learning. Not just APL but experiential learning.

Interviewer: Do you think that delivery staff at UCQ, do you see them as being more academic, or more practical applied, or a mixture?

PRO03: There's a good mix. A balanced mix. We have those strong academics which is what we need of course. We have lecturers with strong industrial backgrounds or awareness but they also understand the pedagogical aspects of work based learning.

Interviewer: In terms of the work relevance, and how important is that, do you think, to learners and employers, that it is relevant to their employment?

PRO03:   Vital.

Interviewer: Social mobility gets talked about quite a bit. Do you think that the degree apprenticeships are furthering that social mobility agenda in a positive way?

PRO03:   Yes I do.

Interviewer: Is your impression of delivery staff at UCQ, do you see them more as assessors working with students, or do you get the impression that it is quite an inspectorial approach?

PRO03:   As I said earlier, there's a good mix. The academics have good industrial experience as well as the right level of academic acumen. The PDAs of course assess. But we need to develop learners to be independent thinkers. We mustn't hand hold them too much. Certainly we must not be guilty of spoon feeding them.

Interviewer: Do you think that we are spoon feeding them?

PRO03:   The tutors no. I think the assessors need to perhaps be a little less helpful. Less directive, as students develop.

Interviewer: Do you think it's a balancing act for UCQ as an organization, and also for delivery staff in particular, to get a balance between working with the students, and then having to mark their work?

PRO03:   No.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ as a provider, has strong industrial links with employers?

PRO03:   We have good relationships with current employers. They help shape the programme.

Interviewer: Do you see UCQ as being place-based?

PRO03:   No. We are subject based and that's what makes us different. It gives us an edge.

Interviewer: Do you think that employers will become the universities of the future? Not necessarily applying to become a university, but are they essentially becoming that place of higher education learning?

PRO03:   What, like Dyson you mean?

Interviewer: Yes. But also UCQ and potentially others.

PRO03:   I think that the workplace will increasingly be a place of learning, but in my experience most of the learning takes place outside of the classroom. I have always encouraged my students to grab a coffee together and to talk about what they have been shown. The best learning takes place that way rather than in the classroom itself. There is a real frustration with the validating body who seem to think that the classroom is the only place that learning takes place, which is so out of date with all the digital and virtual developments that are taking place.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. I have no further questions.

PRO03:   Pleasure.

8.3.1.4 PRO04

Interviewer: So this is interview PRO04 with PRO04. Thanks for agreeing to take part in the interview.

PRO04: No problem.

Interviewer: I'm looking first of all, in terms of the degree apprenticeship and in particular the chartered manager degree apprenticeship. I'm looking at the apprenticeship levy and I'm trying to work out whether you've seen the apprenticeship levy make a difference, in any way, to the number of employers that UCQ's engaged with, and the number of students that's gone on program?

PRO04: Yeah. I think it's made a difference. We've seen an increase in students through Santander, the biggest amount of students that have gone on program, they're a big levy payer. So I think looking at levy payers it's much better, you get a much more bigger volume of students and hopefully can get more on board with bigger companies.

Interviewer: Do you think the apprenticeship levy is making a difference?

PRO04: Yeah, I think so because it makes companies ... they have to use their levy, so it encourages them to use their levy in training up their staff. So I do think it makes a difference.

Interviewer: Just on that point, do you think it's encouraging employers to think more about their training?

PRO04: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think they're planning it in a different way?

PRO04: Yeah, I do. I think ...

Interviewer: What about the review, because often if you look at the plan, do, check and act, or check review, there often seems to be a difference or a disconnect in that ... where as organization might undertake the plan and the do, they don't always then check to see how the program's going and then review it. With the degree apprenticeship and in particular UCQ's CMDA, do you see evidence of, because you'd be the person who collects reviews and so on, do you see evidence of employers being involved in a review process looking at the effectiveness of the program?

PRO04: That's something that we need to see improvement on, to be honest. I don't think that they're engaging enough. The employers are not engaging enough with the students on the program. They said that they'd support them and things, but in the review I think it's just a tick box exercise for them. But, that's something that we're going to review ourselves internally and just make it a bit more meaty that they can't just check boxes but they have to give details about how they feel the CMDA is going for their employer, employees and things.

Interviewer: Do you think that once the employers has candidates on the program it's almost as if they've done the plan and the do, and they're not actually reviewing the effectiveness of the program?

PRO04: Absolutely. And, I think that's where we can come in and give added value to them, and show them, "Actually you're missing a trick". If you actually looked into this and filled out this review per student, you would see what your actual employees are improving on behaviour-wise; the effectiveness they could bring to their job role. It could see a benefit for them. I think they're missing the point there, so hopefully we can improve our internal systems and they can act a bit better.

Interviewer: Do you think that employers are undertaking a formal needs analysis, whether it's an organizational needs analysis or a training needs analysis particular to a, or specific on a person? Do you see them doing that before putting people on the CMDA?

PRO04: I think so. Yeah. I think they would do that as an organization, I think.

Interviewer: Have you seen any change in that as a result of the apprenticeship levy? The reason I'm asking that, is I've noticed that there are a lot of tender opportunities coming out from levy payers, in particular the public sector ones. So, they must now be formally mapping their needs. Just looking at those documents that are coming out, I'm just wondering if you've got any idea whether they always did that or whether that's maybe something that is a result of the funding?

PRO04: I think it's a result of the funding. I don't think it's something that they did. I think training was maybe quite bottom of their to do list, and I think now the levy is forcing them to use it. If they don't use it they lose it, so they may as well invest in their employees. So, I think that's forcing them to look at their organization as a whole and then do a training needs analysis.

Interviewer: Do you think partly the reason that they're doing that analysis is looking at the cost of having the person away from their job invested on the program?

PRO04: Yeah. I think they would look at training that would be least impactful on the business in that the need for the employee to be away from their work as little as possible.

Interviewer: In terms of that needs analysis, I'm just wondering if you know who undertakes that, whether it's the employer, someone within

the employer, or do you see them getting a training needs analyst in, an expert? Or, is it something that UCQ gets involved with, or a combination?

PRO04:   I would just see that as the employer doing that for their own particular organization.

Interviewer: Do you think it's something that UCQ could help with?

PRO04:   Yeah. I do. Definitely.

Interviewer: It's something that maybe they could develop up and work with an employer?

PRO04:   Yeah. Definitely. Just to highlight the positives and what they could gain from it. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Because, it would feed into that review process then, wouldn't it?

PRO04:   Yeah.

Interviewer: If UCQ was getting involved at the outset in terms of the planning and the needs mapping, then that could map towards the review and inform the employer. Because otherwise, I guess there's a danger that employers are putting people on the program but they're not necessarily going to know what impact the program is having?

PRO04:   Yeah. I entirely agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that employers are looking for ... There's literature that ... economic literature that suggests that employers will always look for the economic return from any service that they invest in. I'm just wondering if you think that's true of employee

learning? Whether the employers that you engaged with are looking for a financial return on investment?

PRO04: From the employers point of view, I would say yes they are because they're wanting to put the employees on this program to give them more skills and knowledge. But, the CMDA management apprenticeship so hopefully they can be better managers and maybe learn strategies to earn the company more money in various ways depending on their job role. So, actually I do think that.

Interviewer: Have you seen any evidence of how an employer might measure that financial impact in any way?

PRO04: No. I can't say I've seen any evidence of that.

Interviewer: There was this suggestion that somebody made that the employers might be looking more for indirect financial returns as a result of staff retention and upskilling? Which, I think might be along the lines of what you were saying? As opposed to a direct, "We expect this financial return". It makes it more difficult then I guess, for an employer to be able to measure that?

PRO04: Yeah. No, I agree. I think employee retention is a big thing. I think if they've invested into the CMDA and given them the opportunity to get this degree apprenticeship, I think the expectation would be that they would stay and they would progress in their role and do positive things for their organization.

Interviewer: Do you think the actual program itself, in terms of duration of the program being 40 months, do you think that has an impact on staff retention?

PRO04: Definitely. Yeah. I think the fact that you're signed up for 40 months is a sure sign of ... they have to stay.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's a commitment from, I guess, both employer and employee. I'm just wondering in terms of training, evaluation of training in terms of, not necessarily return on investment, but just how good people feel the training is being? Whether you've seen evidence of that? I know UCQ captures that to an extent on the feedback questionnaires for learners and employers. I'm just wondering, do you think that's important to employers? Are they asking for that feedback?

PRO04: About ... Sorry, say that again?

Interviewer: Are they asking for the feedback on how their employees are doing on the program? (Yes) Whether they enjoy the program? (Definitely) Just the kind of feedback on modules about where they're delivered and the content and everything. I'm just wondering if employers are interested to know what that feedback looks like?

PRO04: Yeah. We ask all of those questions in our student module feedback form after completion of every module. So, we gather that feedback from each student then. We also do academic feedback with the delivery staff per student to get their perspective of changes in their behavior and also their progression in their work, how they're getting on in the program. And then, we have an employer review which, like I say we're going to review ourselves and make it a bit more meaty. But, in that employer review is the chance for us to give them all of that feedback about that student.

PRO04:   But, like I said earlier, I think that they're missing a trick that if they understood the value of the feedback that we could give them about their employee, I think they would really rate it.

Interviewer: In terms of the apprenticeship levy do you see that as a public fund or a private fund?

PRO04:   Public fund.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think employers see it as a public fund or a private fund?

PRO04:   I think a public fund.

Interviewer: Okay. What I'm asking is a question around the expectation of a return from a fund. So, there's literature that suggests that if a fund is a public fund then the public should benefit from the fund because they're paying for it. Not only that, the providers of the fund have that expectation, as in government, but that the learners expect that as a result of them participating on a publicly funded program, there should be a civic return. In other words they should almost be benefiting the state.

Interviewer: Whereas, if it's a private fund there is an expectation that the employer should be the one that ... or the funder if it was the student paying, that the student should see that return. In terms of the apprenticeship levy have you seen any evidence that the employers want or expect a civic return, or that the learners do? Has anybody talked about that?

PRO04:   I don't think anybody's actually talked about that subject, to my knowledge. Or in any feedback that I've processed, there's not been a mention of that.

Interviewer: No? Okay, thanks for that. In terms of how employers and apprentices became aware of UCQ's CMDA program, I'm just wondering how effective you think the marketing and recruitment was, and whether there's room for improvement there from UCQ?

PRO04: I think there's definitely room for improvement. I think UCQ are not known enough. I think the CMDA is getting known, but more and more providers are offering it, the program. But, UCQ as an organization I think their marketing plan should be ... it could be definitely improved to reach a lot more people.

Interviewer: There's talk about it being a tripartite, almost quite a unique tripartite between the three parties, so the provider, the employer and the learners. Have you seen evidence of that? Do you think it was a true tripartite with the employer and the learners, or is UCQ not involved until people are on the program? Just wondering what your thoughts are.

PRO04: I think perhaps initially UCQ weren't involved until people were on the program. However, I think further down the line with the likes of Press Association and Santander learners, I think UCQ were heavily involved before people were signed up. And, I think that's where I've seen improvements in the marketing strategy, and UCQ being known and getting such a big contract as Santander is proof of that. And, having someone like that I think would add value to UCQ being a known organization for the CMDA.

Interviewer: Have you seen a change once students are one the program? Is the employer as involved as they were, or is UCQ more involved now?

PRO04: I'd say for the two companies that I've just made examples, so Press Association, the HR team are quite involved, As in I have to communicate with them about student's results once a month,

give them a breakdown of that. And, as for Santander, that's a two weekly meeting with the employers for Santander, talking about each student and catching any issues that arise. So, we're heavily involved with Santander.

Interviewer: Yes. Thanks for that. In terms of the on-program activity, do you think that it suits employed learners. In terms of there must be a real challenge I imagine, people are full time employed and then they're also undertaking a degree. Do you think the apprenticeship, do you think it suits people who are employed?

PRO04: I think it does. I think it does. I think it's a big commitment, and they have to understand that it will be a big commitment and they're going to have to spend a lot of time, especially on the assessment one, their assignments. However, assessment two and three, I think that's great for being employed because they're doing their job and it's just we're evidencing them do their job and gaining the evidence we need to prove competence in assessment two and three. So, I think that's good that they're employed because we couldn't get that otherwise.

Interviewer: So that's more mode two learning, through reflection and so on. How important do you think the contextualization of those first assignments is?

PRO04: I think it's really important. I think for the employer especially because really they want their learners to go onto this program, but essentially come up with good ideas to improve their organization. And, also for the learners who come on program, if they can talk about their organization, what they know, what they understand, then it's going to be a lot easier for them to write an assignment on it, write a reflection on it, gather evidence for it.

PRO04: And, like I say, for the employer it's going to be good because they can come up with something. I think somebody did in ... I think it was Santander. I think it was something around their portfolio evidence that they had done that their manager had no knowledge of it because the learner wasn't confident enough to say it to their manager. However, our professional development assessor saw this, took it to the manager and they are running with it ... and they were amazed that they created this whatever it was, which was borne from Colleen doing the observation and discussion and uncovered this. Yeah, I think it's beneficial for the employer.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ sees itself ... Do you see yourself and UCQ as being more of a practical and applied provider, or a traditional academic institution? Or a mixture?

PRO04: A bit of both. A mixture of both. Our delivery staff are very academic professionals, so in that sense it's very academic. The way our assignments are structured, referencing things, it's very structured. But then, you've got the other side to it where it's very vocational, evidence based, with our portfolio and thing for assessment two and three. So that's why I think it's a bit mixed.

Interviewer: Do you think that the work relevance that again, going back to the contextualization but in conjunction with that question about academics or tutors or facilitators. Do you think that the importance of the work in terms of the relevance to the learner and employers, do you think it makes it difficult for UCQ rather than, as an example having set assignments where it was a case study but it might be a fabricated case study? Do you think it makes it more difficult for UCQ delivery staff to mark? Have you seen any evidence of any difficulties or differences within the marking as a result of those contextualized assignments?

PRO04:	Yeah, because it depends on the organization. In some organizations it's a real stretch to get the evidence needed or the examples of within their role to put in their assignments because of the organization, because of the industry they work in. So, perhaps some industries aren't entirely suited to the CMDA even if it was contextualized. So sometimes it's not a real time thing that we talked about, they've fabricated it. So, I think that's difficult. It's much easier for them to mark, the academic stuff to mark if it's actually happening in their job and it's a more natural thing that they can write about and reflect about.

Interviewer:	Do you think that in the future we might have the option to have reflection on actual ... or say in an assignment, writing about their employer or giving them the option to write about another organization. Do you think that might be an idea?

PRO04:	Yeah, that would be a good idea.

Interviewer:	Do you think that the degree apprenticeships help to further social mobility?

PRO04:	Yeah, I do. I think a lot ... not a lot of people on the CMDA, I don't mean the majority of the people. But, some people would never have had the option to go to university and now that they've got this option, I think it does open doors for them that they might not have even known about. So, I do think it-

Interviewer:	Is that something that's important to you?

PRO04:	Yeah. I think it's important because I feel people should always strive to be better, to earn more money. Everybody wants better things in their working life, to get promotions. Yeah, I think it's definitely important to a lot of people.

Interviewer: In terms of the students that you've met, have any of them talked about experiencing difficulties in getting into a university before?

PRO04: I know a few of them have said that it was never an option to them. It was never an option to them, they never even thought about it because it would cost them too much money and they couldn't think of paying back a student loan. So, when this opportunity came, it's free to them and they were delighted that it opened the doors, that it made it possible for them to actually get a degree. Even at their later age, they're not young 18 year old. I think it's opened a lot of doors for people.

Interviewer: Do you think in terms of younger students who maybe if they're new to the job role it might not be an issue for the employer (the kind of) off the job, but a lot of people are talking about this 20% off the job. Do you think that for mature existing managers, do you see it as being a barrier for employers and/or learners?

PRO04: Yeah. I think they just don't understand it properly. I think that they think it's extra that they will have to do, but really it's things that they would already do but they just need to evidence. I think it's just the understanding of it that they may think it's a barrier.

Interviewer: Do you think that it's a challenge for you in your role to help to ... either to record that or to provide the means for learners and employers to record that?

PRO04: Yeah. We've had struggles in the past recording that and catching that. However, with the employment of Colleen, our professional development assessor, we've produced paperwork that now captures that. So, when Colleen goes she will ask them about their off the job learning and what they've done, and she'll show them how to evidence it and reiterate the importance of evidencing it and what it's about. She gives them examples of the

types of off the job learning that they can capture and things. Moving forward, I think it's easy enough to capture, but only from this academic year I would say.

Interviewer: Okay. Have you seen any evidence that the 20% off the job stops participation?

PRO04: No. I've not seen any evidence of that.

Interviewer: Okay. In terms of UCQ's delivery staff, do you see them more as assessing rather than inspecting? Do you think they work with students or do you think that they keep an arm's-length? What evidence have you seen?

PRO04: I think they work with students. I think they're really supportive of students, in the feedback that they give them, the developmental feedback that they give them. And the tutorials, I think they're really supportive.

Interviewer: In terms of UCQ as a provider do you think that it has good industrial or employer connections? Do you think that that makes a difference to the employers who choose UCQ?

PRO04: Yeah. I do. Like I was saying earlier, I think having a contract with Santander gives UCQ more credibility. And, for other potential employers coming on board with us, I think if they knew Santander was a client, press Association is a client, that will encourage them to have a contract with us.

Interviewer: Yes. Just one last question. In terms of, people talk about place based that institutions are ... So, traditionally universities and polytechnics were both of a place and for a place.

Interviewer: Now, it almost seems to me that for example, we've talked about Santander who are a national employer, they have students all

over England. It might be quite difficult for them to ... they couldn't use one institution that was place based to deliver to all of their staff, because they'd have people coming from London up to Leicester or across to Leicester and so on. So, do you see a change either for traditionally place based universities needing to become national, or for new providers such as UCQ. Do you see an opportunity for them to engage with those national employers?

PRO04:   Yeah. I do. I think that UCQ for example, as an organization has to be a national ... I think if you're location based you're limited in who your customers could be. And, I think you have to just mimic yourself in different places, wherever the need is throughout the country. And, I think to offer that, that flexibility will attract far more potential employers. I think, where Newcastle University was for Newcastle and of Newcastle, I think that's all changed because of funding. So they've recruited lots of international students to try and fill the gaps. So I don't think it's definitely local as it was before. So I definitely think that's had a change. In terms of employers, I think they're just looking for the best value for money and probably the organization that can customize or meet their needs. I don't think you have to be in a specific place, so if you've got staff who can travel who customize the program, then I think that's what the employer wants.

Interviewer: Have employers said anything about where UCQ is located? Does it seem to bother them at all?

PRO04:   Absolutely not. No. The fact that we will travel to them and not put them out, it's never come up as an issue.

Interviewer: Yes. One last question just related to this higher education and the civic return, and higher education-ness. Do you think that there's potentially a change in that it's almost as if those

employers ... Bearing in mind, if the learning is taking place at Santander for example, do you think that it's almost as if Santander in its own right is almost becoming like a university if that's where the learning takes place?

PRO04:   I don't think so.

Interviewer: Do you not?

PRO04:   No.

Interviewer: Where do you think that university is then? Do you think it's a virtual ...

PRO04:   Yeah.

Interviewer: You do?

PRO04:   Yeah. I do. I think it matters not where the learning takes place, but it matters the resources and things that we put together. I think virtual university is where we are I would say, because we're everywhere and we can be everywhere which is what the need is nowadays.

Interviewer: Yes. Well, thank you very much. I've asked you all the questions I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you want to add?

PRO04:   No. I don't think so.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

8.3.1.5 PRO05

Interviewer: This is interview PRO 05. PRO05, can I just ask you, so I'm curious to know what effects, if any, the difference in the co-investment is making or is likely to make. So where, at the minute, there's an employer co-investment of 10% and the government are looking to reduce that to five percent. I'm just wondering whether you think that's going to make any difference at all or much of a difference to an employer deciding to either to go outside of their levy funds, or for employers that aren't in scope for the levy, whether you think it's likely to make a difference to them in terms of putting people on the program.

PRO05: I think it will for the small employers. I think it will probably increase the number of small employers who will engage with the apprenticeship programs, and higher level ones, because I think at the moment for a small organization, an SME in particular, it's very expensive. Even the 10%. And previously, a lot of the apprenticeships have been free of charge or had a very small fee, so I think by reducing it, then yes, I think there would be an increase in smaller organizations.

PRO05: In terms of the co-investment for larger organizations, I don't think larger organizations will really go outside their 10%, because I think a lot of larger organizations are struggling to spend the levy as it is. And lots of organizations still haven't really got their head round how the levy works or the 10% or the co-investment. So therefore I think it's two separate markets. Large employers, I think, it will be not really relevant to at the moment. In the future, as they start to spend their levy and use it up, then they may look to go outside the 10%. But I think from a CDMA program, which is already 22,000, then the 10% of some organizations may not even cover for additional employees to attend the program.

Interviewer: Do you think there should be any investment? Do you think it's a positive thing in terms of engagement with employers and learners that there is that co-investment, or do you think it should be abolished altogether?

PRO05: I mean historically I would say that where we had lots of SMEs who had apprentices, we've lost a lot of that market because employers can't afford to fund the apprenticeship, pay the wages, et cetera, even if it's just 10% of 5%, whatever it's going to be in the future. So I think from the small organization's point of view, I think probably it should go back to being ... even if it was 1% or a very nominal fee, because they're having to pay the wages of the staff, they're having to recruit them. They're still having to do in-house training and all the additional costs they've got from a business perspective. So therefore, for a lot of firms they can't afford to take on an apprentice plus pay 10% of a fee.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. I'm wondering whether you think that the apprenticeship levy is making a difference within the apprenticeship market or within employer training?

PRO05: Yes, I think if you look at the statistics the number of apprentices is declined massively since the levy was introduced. And I think there's a number of reasons for that. One, because organizations don't really understand the levy and how it works. Some employers are going to write off the levy because they just don't want to be involved in that process. But I think really a lot of organizations haven't been ready for the levy, and training departments have looked at how they can support their existing staff on apprenticeship programs. So they're diverting the funds from internal training programs to apprenticeships, which may not be the best for the organization or the learner. But if that's the way

they can fund it, then that's where they're doing a shift. But I think the levy's had a massive impact on both internal and external.

Interviewer: Do you think the levy's here to stay?

PRO05: I don't know. I don't know the answer to that question.

Interviewer: Do you think the employers want it to? Do you think employers ...?

PRO05: Probably not.

Interviewer: No?

PRO05: I don't think employers want it to stay. I think employers would like to go back to where it was where they had that freedom. And I know there's been some talk of being able to use your levy funds for other things. Whether it changes in that respect, but I think that would be useful. Or where you could trade it off, the apprenticeship levy with something else for your employees. Because for an organization, apprenticeships are not always the right thing. So like for me, as an employee, if somebody says you need to do a level seven apprenticeship, well actually that's not the best thing for me. Dipping into little pockets of it in terms of leadership training might be okay, but doing a full level seven apprenticeship is just not always appropriate.

Interviewer: I'm just looking at the kind of plan, do, check, act process, and I'm just interested to know if from your experience the training that is undertaken on an apprenticeship, whether it's a full plan, do, check, act. There are some indications that often the plan and the do takes place and not the actual check and review process. So I'm just curious to know if you think that those reviews are taking

place, both program reviews and your reviews within the employer to see what the effectiveness of the program is.

PRO05: I think the effectiveness of the program is not really measured. I think from an academic perspective you've got the OU annual report, so I definitely think there's the review is part of that process where you say to the OU yes, these are the things that have gone well, these are the things that we would do differently, there's an action plan in place. So from an academic perspective. But from an employer's perspective, I don't think they'll review where the learner started and where they've gone to and what impact that's had on the team, the organizational objectives, the strategy, individuals. I think, well, it's very difficult to measure, for a start. But I think sometimes there's a lack of buy in from supervisors and employers, and therefore, you've got this learner, maybe somebody in your team who's gone off and doing an apprenticeship in management, come back with all the new ideas but they can't always implement them because of barriers within the organization.

Interviewer: At UCQ do you think that's something that should change? Do you think we should do more to work with the employers to review the effectiveness of the program?

PRO05: I think so, yeah. I think there needs to be more involvement from the employers. Whether it's just a once a year annual event where you get them to come in, have it like as an afternoon tea or something, but get them to say what they've enjoyed about the program and what changes could be made. From my perspective, I'm not sure that they are involved. I don't know how much involvement. I mean, Colleen was saying this morning she is getting some feedback from employers, but I think a formal process, in terms of that, would be very useful.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. Do you know, just in terms of employers that you've had dealings with, do you know if they're undertaking formal needs mapping, either an organizational needs analysis or a training needs analysis? Have you seen any evidence of that?

PRO05: Yes. Some organizations have started to do it because, especially once we introduce the level seven apprenticeship, then it was very important we had the right people in place. So they were carrying out internal needs analyses because they opened it up and said who wants to attend, had loads of requests, and then they went to do the needs analysis to actually say, well, who really needs this training, what benefit is it going to be to you and the organization?

PRO05: But the other thing that we put in place is at the start, each individual learner had to do their own self assessment against the modules and the criteria and rate themselves between nought and 10. So you might get some learners who say, well, I'm an expert in finance. You might get those that say, well, actually I've only got 50% knowledge in that area. And therefore, everybody would have an individual plan with the employer so that it would say, Interviewer needs to do finance, PRO05 needs to do leading people, and then the employer would have to provide opportunities for those examples to take place in the workplace.

Interviewer: So when you said they're starting to do that, do you think that the fact that this is a degree apprenticeship, and the fact that it's funded through the apprenticeship levy, do you think either of those things is making that difference? It's leading employers maybe to plan and to map the needs of the program more than they perhaps previously would have done.

PRO05:   I think so because I think previously, say the local authority where they had X amount of money and they said, OK you can have 30 learners a year. Whether they were in the right role or not was probably not as important as it is as part of the apprenticeship because it's about that endpoint assessment as well. It's about the reflections, and it's being able to provide that evidence as part of the program. And I think if they're not in the right role, and that assessment hasn't been carried out initially, you're sort of setting up some of the learners to fail.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. Have you seen any particular training needs analysis models that you could say "I witnessed this employer using this model", or are you just aware that they are starting to analyze their training needs and not necessarily know which model they're using?

PRO05:   For the local authority, I'm not sure they use a particular model, but they had created a Word template document that had various questions in that was based on their previous experience, current and future expectations, and also looked at their qualifications. But I'm not sure if I could link it to a model. I'm not sure if it was a specific model or whether they just put something together themselves to try and get the buy in of the staff.

Interviewer: But it sounds as if it's more of a training needs analysis model that is linked to the individual and their existing competency rather than perhaps an organization task person model that might be looking at, although it could well be an OTP model, but it looks like it's not necessarily looking at a kind of organizational deficit and saying, well, the company should be producing a million widgets, we're only producing half a million, what can we put in place to increase that. It looks like it is more around that person.

So really, sounds like an OTP model. So they're linking the individual person to the task or process and looking at their needs.

PRO05: Yes. I think I would say it's more individual based than looking at the organization and saying what's the organization need.

Interviewer: And I mean we've seen evidence of it through the tenders that are increasingly coming out, that there's clearly been a lot of work on looking at, in some cases in the public sector, on those training needs. Do you happen to know when the employers that you've dealt with, when they're undertaking that needs analysis, whether they do it themselves internally or whether they bring in an external analyst, or whether they're using the provider such as UCQ to help them with that?

PRO05: The local authority, it was a joint approach. So they would initially get their questionnaires completed by the staff, and then I would be on the panel, as the provider, with the employer, and we would look at them together and we would come to some judgments in terms of whether we thought the person was appropriate or not. Because they have the organizational experience but they don't necessarily have the understanding of the qualification and the program. So between us, we could talk about each individual person and go yes or no.

Interviewer: I mean the literature suggests that all employers are looking for a financial return on investment from every service that they fund or provide. I'm just wondering whether you personally think that's true in terms of employee learning. Whether in fact it's something that can be measured and is measured in terms of a financial impact to the employer.

PRO05: I think it's almost impossible to measure. If you look at the academic theory models and journals that's out there, they're all

suggesting it's very difficult to measure financial return on investment of an employee because, if you've got a program of 10 learners within an organization, they've all got different starting and end points. And therefore, the measurement tool would be so diverse to measure it for every individual, it becomes very complex.

PRO05: And people talk about Kirkpatrick and the fourth level, but that, to me, doesn't get the return on investment. So I honestly don't know how you could measure return on investment from the financial perspective. Especially if you're in a public sector organization and you're providing a service rather than manufacturing something, it's almost impossible to say somebody's attended your course and the sole factor in their increased performance is by the attendance on that course. Because there might be other factors. They might have had a conversation outside, there might have been an actual learning set, they might have done additional reading. So I think it's almost impossible to measure. I think, yes, organizations need it and more organizations are having to put metrics in place to measure performance, but I think we're a long way from measuring.

Interviewer: I think so too. The Kirkpatrick/Phillips, it was really intended to help evaluate the training itself, wasn't it? It was never intended to go to that extra level and to look at the return on investment. But I know people sometimes do. But I've found the same thing, that in terms of, yes people want to measure, but actually ascertaining or working out what that measure is is very difficult.

Interviewer: Then again, on the other hand, how does UCQ as an organization help employers to understand that the program is making those changes. So we've got a balance there because we need to do what we can to evidence those changes. Part of that we're trying

to do within the program itself and get people, certainly in year three, the individuals on the program, to document what changes the program has had, what changes they have made that are as a consequence of the program and then take that to the employer.

PRO05: I mean I think really it should be through the review process as well. So each of the reviews, if it's every three months, the learner should be able to say, well, actually, this was my starting point 12 weeks ago, this is how I feel I've developed, this is the contribution I've made to my team and my department in the last 12 weeks, and it's documented through that process. Or they have to do an assessment at the beginning, and then at the end of every year, which then becomes part of their reflection, to show that they have developed. Because a lot of the things, the soft skills, which are again, quite difficult to measure in terms of somebody's communication skills or interpersonal skills, but I think, yes, organizations want to know. One way I think they get to know is through the review process. But that needs to be much more, I think, precise, in terms of the questions that are being asked, in terms of the measurement output.

Interviewer: I'm interested to know what your perception is about the apprenticeship levy. Do you see it as a public or private source of funding?

PRO05: Well, I would have said public. I've never thought about it 'till you asked us that question. But I suppose it's the private. It's the employer paying into that levy pot.

Interviewer: Do you think that it makes a difference in terms of, I mean certainly the government see it as public money in that it's taken from the private sector as a hypothecated tax and it's therefore immediately it becomes public money. But I'm just interested to

know ... Some people are saying they see it as a private fund. Even though they understand it is public fund, they see it as a private fund and the fact that the employers have that digital account with their fund in it, they're seeing it more as a private fund.

Interviewer: I'm just wondering whether you think it makes a difference in terms of how employers and learners, what return they would expect. So it comes back to this idea about, if the learner is paying for the program then the literature suggests that learners want a return for themselves if they're investing. If the employer is investing then there's a suggestion that the employers want the training or the program to improve something within the employer's business. If it's public sector funding, then the suggestions by the economists are that it should have a public return because it is public money. So I'm just wondering whether, do you think it makes that much of a difference if employers perceive it as a public fund or a private fund?

PRO05: I don't think so. I don't think a lot of employers understand enough about it to be able to differentiate whether it is private or public funded. I think because of the government involvement they probably think it's more of a public fund, and like you say, it's a tax that a lot of them don't want to pay. But I wouldn't say that it would make much difference, personally. I think, yeah, there needs to be that return for the employer or anybody really. We can't just be throwing money at things. But how you measure that return, I think, is almost impossible.

Interviewer: And then in a way it's not that far different, I suppose, if you think about a polytechnic with the strong industrial links is training people up in conjunction with often the employers to go into that industry or to that employer. So even then, I think, funds

previously that were seen as public funds, because they were, there may be a civic return, but there was definitely also value adding to the industries and the employers. So maybe this isn't that far different. Even though the apprenticeship levy itself is new, I guess the idea of this type of training and supporting employers isn't something that's totally new.

PRO05: I don't think it is. And I think the work-based, even if you look at universities and how they've had to move and incorporate work-based learning, although a very loose term, it has to be more about skills than just the academic approach. We can't have these people that we're training who come out with knowledge but actually can't do the job at the end of the day. So I definitely think that move to a more integrated approach of employers and training providers is a good thing.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. You talked earlier about almost a tripartite relationship between the provider, the employer and the learners. I'm just wondering how effective you think UCQ is at that, or whether there's scope for improvement, as other people have suggested?

PRO05: I think it's got better this academic year with the changes that have been put in place. And I think the employers are much more involved and, having Colleen in post specifically to work with the employers; so I think that's definitely improved. However, I don't think it's just a UCQ thing, I think it's a national problem in the fact that employers don't really want to engage to the level that's really required for an apprenticeship to make it wholly effective. So from an employer's perspective, there's probably a lot of box ticking. But actually, the actual involvement in the program and developing their learners isn't really as effective as it could be.

Interviewer: In terms of the on-program activity, I'm just wondering whether you think that it suits the employed learners. I mean by that, that there are clearly difficulties in releasing people for the time that they need to be on the program. I'm just wondering how effective really you think this type of program is. Not specifically UCQ's program, but this type of program where people are full-time employed and then they're undertaking the program as well. I'm just wondering whether it's something that's required by the marketplace, or if almost we're just trying to shoehorn an existing degree qualification into a program so that it's funded.

PRO05: I think for the CDMA, which is level six, they need the degree, so therefore there has to be this type of program. So I don't think you can do it without the qualification. Obviously some of the apprenticeships you can and I think that's different. But for this program in particular, I think you do need both taught and applied content.

PRO05: I like the UCQ model in the fact that you've got blended learning, so therefore it's two days per module that they attend sessions. That is difficult. If you read a lot of the research, people getting out of work is problematic. But I still think the best thing for them is to come out of the workplace, come to a safe place where they can work together, have the group discussions, and collaborate together to build their knowledge. Because I think in the workplace they don't get that. If you had a mentor, that would be the one person that you would get information from. In a group session you can share all of your experiences from different types of organizations or even different parts of organizations, and I think that is invaluable in this type of program.

Interviewer: Are you saying that they really the cohort mix is an important part of the program?

PRO05:   Well, yes and no. I think it depends on the cohort. I think possibly your UCQ cohort is probably too tightly knit and therefore you haven't got the spread within the group. But I think from a larger employer, so say at Santander, where you've got people from different parts of the organization, I think that would be different. And I think it's fine within an organization because you'll have people who implement the policies slightly differently. You would have them interpreting different things in different way, but also different cultures, different operating procedures. So therefore, they can share those experiences, but within the Santander environment, so therefore that should bring in development across the organization.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. Do you think the CMDA is sufficiently contextualized for learners? Is that feedback that you're getting, or do you think it should be more contextualized, or less contextualized and more sort of case study based outside of the employer? Just wondering what your thoughts are now that we're sort of two years into the program.

PRO05:   We had that discussion this morning, actually, and I think it needs probably more of a mix. The problem with any of these type of programs is that when you have different employers they may then come with different requirements. So from a provider perspective, and universities are finding this exceptionally difficult on their programs, how do you cater for 10 different employers who may want different things.

PRO05:   So one of the things I said this morning is, when I've done in-house training programs, it's just to use their policies. So if you're doing an HR module, you talk about Acas and you then get them to bring their polices and you compare their policies with best practice in the industry so they're not losing the context within

their organization, but they're also finding out what it's like outside. And to me, that's the best of both. I know Andy was talking about having total customized programs, but I don't think that is the total way forward because people need to see outside their organization. And especially a local authority, for example, if they don't look outside they can't see how they've got to move on and change and they're never going to survive. To me, it's not helpful, purely and simply, looking at that industry. I think case study comparing it with a different industry is good practice. But I think the contextualized is also quite useful. Definitely for learners because sometimes they'll be sitting there thinking what's this got to do with me? How's this any relevance to my job? So I think where you can incorporate it, great.

Interviewer: In terms of delivery staff, do you see UCQ delivery staff as being more on the kind of traditional academics or more towards sort of work-based learning tutors and facilitators?

PRO05:   I suppose I don't really know enough about the tutors to be fair. I think from meeting Kevin and Gareth today, I would say Kevin definitely has got more of that work-based background. I think I've got that work-based background. But whether Andy has, I don't know enough about it. But I think you need to have both. You need to have an understanding of both, and I don't think you can deliver a module and not understand the work-based elements because you have to see the whole picture and how it fits together. And I know previously some of that's been left to one side but to me, you've got to know the whole package. So you need to be an academic because you've got to do the academic delivery, but you have to understand it from a work-based perspective. And really, you need to have worked as a manager or a leader in that role to bring those experiences to life in the classroom.

Interviewer: Do you think in itself it is a tension, this sort of the academic as opposed to the practical applied?

PRO05: Definitely. And I think you need two teams. You need an academic team and you need a vocational team to do the support. But really, even your vocational team need to have an academic background to a certain extent, definitely the higher up you go because they have need to understand the content in the assignments and the models and the theories that are being delivered. But I also think that your academic team need to understand the work-based evidence so they can bring it into context and talk about it during sessions. So the learner's just not left to the end and then, oh I've got this to do and I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Just in terms of your own observations within UCQ, do you think that staff are working in an assessed type of capacity, or do you see them working with students, or do you see it more as a kind of inspectorial approach where students are told what to do and then have to go off and do it themselves?

PRO05: I think that second is more, from what I've seen, and I don't get to see a huge amount. I just really get to see the end product, so it's difficult. But I get the feeling, and it's just a feeling, that they're taught during the sessions or lectured at with some activities built in, but it's probably not as interactive as it could be with the whole elements of the whole module. Or even thinking about the end point assessment, where I'd be saying to the learners, this here you need to think about when you come to do your end point assessment. So that again they're not getting to two and a half years down the program and then thinking god, what's this thing we've got to do at the end. I've forgotten about it, I was two and a half years ago at the start.

PRO05:   But I think it needs people who understand both aspects. I think if you had a pure academic then it would be a nightmare because I think even the university, I can tell you, they've got the similar experience where academics are going to try and do the assessment but it's just a nightmare because it's about personality as well. I think you have to know what is the personality to engage the learner, get the employer on board and smooth out that whole process and make it as simple as possible for everybody.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. Do you think that the degree apprenticeships support the social mobility agenda?

PRO05:   Don't know, I suppose. I think ...

Interviewer: Do you think it's important or not really important? I'm just wondering what you personally think.

PRO05:   I think we need something for apprentices. I think my personal view is that we've got academic and vocational qualifications and the vocational qualifications have always been the poor relative of the academic. And you only were ever going to get anywhere if you were going on a traditional degree route. But I think that's not really appropriate for everybody, and I think the level of debt the kids are now getting into, I think therefore having a route where they can go from level three to level seven, which is what some employers are offering, is absolutely fantastic. And I think the kids are not getting in debt, they're going to get their qualifications, they're getting their experience, and then they're going to have the social mobility because they're going to be able to use that in their both personal and professional lives.

PRO05:   At the minute, a lot of apprentices stop at level three. Very few move beyond level three. And there's some research that backs

that up, to show that. So we do need something that allows those particular people to move into a degree without probably having to do a part-time degree.

Interviewer: Do you think that the social mobility is an influencing factor for the employer, or for learners themselves? Have you seen any evidence of that? Do people talk about it?

PRO05: Not at all.

Interviewer: No?

PRO05: I think from a learner's point of view they want the degree. Not necessarily apprenticeship, but they want the degree and they want the qualification. And if their employer's going to fund it for them, great. The employer wants to use it to develop the staff and use their levy funding. I don't think social mobility is high on the agenda in terms of what I've seen.

Interviewer: Have learners that you've had engagement with, have any of them experienced or said to you that they experienced difficulties getting into university before?

PRO05: Not difficulties, but some of them probably wouldn't have even considered it. So quite a lot of learners that we had on the program would have been older, probably late 30s, early 40s, maybe women who were returning to work and looking to progress their careers, and obviously were been given this opportunity by their employer. And they probably never would have gone to university at 18 because of circumstances, or I mean even qualifications. Quite a lot of the people that we get didn't always have the English and maths, so obviously we had to put them through functional skills to get their English and maths up. But that's a barrier to them getting to university.

Interviewer: A lot of people have been talking about the 20% off the job. I'm just wondering whether you see that 20% off the job element as being a significant barrier either for learners or employers?

PRO05: I do think it's a barrier, but I think it's been shoved under the carpet to some extent in the fact that the employer's paying lip service to say you can have your 20%, but in reality, learners are not getting that 20%. So lots of people that I talk to, they'll say I'm not getting my 20%. I mean there is some confusion in the fact I need a day off a week and there's confusion about the elements of the 20%.

PRO05: But I think we had a document where they had to record all of it, and they were recording it but if you spoke to the individual learners then they would say I'm not really getting my 20% off the job. I think for an employer to release the staff member for one day a week, I think, is quite difficult. So spreading it over a period of time is probably better. But I still think it's a bit of a nightmare. And we did evening classes as well, but if their contract finished at five, they then couldn't use that time on an evening. So that's another barrier. So the employer, effectively, had to give the staff member that time off and back. So I think it's a massive barrier, but I think it's been interesting when Ofsted come, or whoever, in terms of what happens. But I think at the minute, learners are complaining they're not getting it.

Interviewer: In terms of UCQ as a provider, I'm just wondering, do you perceive UCQ as having strong links with industry and with employers?

PRO05: Yeah, from what I've seen. Obviously since I've started working with UCQ you've got some great links with employers. A variety of different employers.

Interviewer: Do you think that's important for the delivery of a degree apprenticeship?

PRO05: Yes, absolutely. I definitely think you do. And I think CPD for staff going back into industry I think is also important because it's okay coming out of industry and coming to a classroom, but actually you still need to know what's going on out there. It's no good just being totally focused in a classroom. You can read all you like, but it's not the same as being in the workplace.

Interviewer: In terms of my last question, really, people talk about place based and if you look at the post-'92 universities, certainly when they were polytechnics they were very much seen as being both of a place and for a place. So Northumbria we talked about would be Newcastle Polytechnic based in Newcastle would also be for the people of Newcastle and the industries of Newcastle. It seems as if that it's started to change within the universities, but also that from a degree apprenticeship point of view with employers, it seems to be a difficult thing for an organization, for an employer, to engage with a place based institution. That either the place based institution needs to become more of a national deliverer, or that we need alternative providers coming into the marketplace that can deliver.

Interviewer: So you mentioned Santander, they've got learners across England. So it's difficult for them to engage with one university if that university only delivers in a particular place, or indeed has a focus on supporting learners within that geography. So I'm just wondering if you think that there will be a difference, that the apprenticeship levy and the degree apprenticeships will make a difference to the higher education landscape.

PRO05:   I think, yes, it will. I mean obviously I think, where Northumbria was for Northumbria and Newcastle, I think that's all changed because of funding. So they've recruited lots of international students to try and fill the gaps. So I don't think it's definitely local as it was before. So I definitely think that's had a change. In terms of employers, I think they're just looking for the best value for money and probably the organization that can customize or meet their needs. I don't think you have to be in a specific place, so if you've got staff who can travel who customize the program, then I think that's what the employer wants.

PRO05:   I think going to a university they'll get a standard block program, which basically everybody has to fit into. And I think that's where some of the problems will come with the apprenticeship because it doesn't work for all employees. And they'll start saying well, this is not relevant to me, why am I doing this, why am I coming here? But I think in terms of the whole higher education landscape's got to change because this, with the kids getting so much debt, mine, she doesn't want to leave home. I think more kids want to stay local because they don't want to leave home and they can't afford to leave home so they're traveling to universities. Some universities don't really want to engage in apprenticeships. I think with the fee being reduced that's going to have an impact on universities. So I think private providers or smaller organizations are probably going to be more viable, where universities are probably going to say we can't run it for £22,000, so therefore we're not doing it.

Interviewer: Do you think that that whole idea about alternative provision or providers and that sort of national provision, you may not have thought of it, but I'm just going to raise it anyway and just ask you what you think, whether you think that in terms of the changes within higher education, whether the actual companies

themselves are becoming a part of the university, a part of the higher education institution and experience?

PRO05: Yeah, and I think they need to be. I think employers need to be more involved. So I would have people from the employers coming in just to do guest block sessions. Even if it was 20 minutes or half an hour, but I might introduce a model and then get them to say how it works here. And I think employers need to be more engaged. And particularly in traditional universities where it's an MBA program and these are the modules and everybody does the same. That isn't going to work on the apprenticeships at all. And employers aren't going to want it because they're going to get more in debt from their employees.

Interviewer: Do you think there's a possibility that, just taking that a step further, that in the future that an organization, an employer is almost actually a university in their own right?

PRO05: Well some have started applying for a university, yeah. I think some larger organizations may consider it. However, sitting on this side of the fence as an academic, I think it's going to be very difficult for them to be able to do it because they're going to have to collaborate with EG, (the OU), and they're going to have to understand the rules and regulations; they're going to have to have the staff that are qualified to deliver them. So I think yes, some organizations may contemplate it, however, I think once they find out about Office of Students and all the rest of it, it probably is too complicated for most employers to engage with.

Interviewer: I know what you're saying, but I suppose just again taking that just a step further, for an organization such as the Open University or UCQ, or any other university or university centre, almost to work with the employer so that the employer company becomes

a place of higher education. Not that they necessarily have to formally become a university, but that they essentially become a university in that that's where higher education takes place.

PRO05: Yeah, and we did that. We did delivery on their sites, and to be honest, that's where it worked best because you customized it for those employees and that's where we got the best feedback because it wasn't generic to everybody, it was specific programmed to those learners. They went to the other room on a Thursday morning, that was the program and how it was delivered.

Interviewer: Well thanks for that. I've asked all of my questions. Is there anything else that you want to add?

PRO05: I can't think of anything. If I do, I'll email you.

Interviewer: Thank you very much indeed.

8.3.1.6 PRO06

Interviewer: This is interview PRO06. So PRO06, the first question I'm going to ask you is what your thoughts are regarding employer co-investment. So this is more relating to smaller, non-levy paying organizations, and also organizations that pay the levy that run out of funds. So recently the announcement was that, that 10% co-investment is going to be reduced to 5% for smaller employers. I'm just wondering whether you think that's gonna make much difference?

PRO06:   Well I can personally, I think that's the small employers take up of apprenticeships whether it's 10% or whether it's 5% is difficult. Their understanding of the levy and levy payments, there's a lot of organization out there that just don't understand it, and smaller organizations are more intent of actually making the product, I'm talking about engineering here, than getting involved with the levy. So there's very little understanding. So whether it's 5% or 10%. The interesting, and I don't know what the stats are, it would be interesting to see what the take up of small companies and non-levy payers are actually taking up the opportunity for getting involved in this, as opposed to some of the larger companies who can't extend the levy funding.

Interviewer: Do you think that there should be a co-investment by the employer, outside of their levy funds? Or if they haven't got a levy account? Or do you think it should be abandoned altogether? Or sorry, abolished all together?

PRO06:   Are you talking about small companies?

Interviewer: Yes, small companies.

PRO06: Yeah, I think small companies should be paying something towards it, so they get not only are they getting that amount, but also they're investing, and seen to be investing, in the people who are actually taking it onboard on this. And also bringing, not only existing employers, but also new employees into the organization.

Interviewer: Do you think that the apprenticeship levy is making a difference?

PRO06: I don't think it is making a difference, I think, at the moment. I think it will make a difference going forward because some employers are treating this as tax, some people are actually using it as their budget. You know, they're training budget is what they use so when they're training personnel go along and ask them for their training say "I'm sorry, we've already paid that into the levy, that's what you've got." And there's other organizations actually embracing it. So far as I think once it gets embedded and the funding if you like, is reviewed, then there may be more uptake.

PRO06: The big issue at the moment, especially for large organizations such as the University, the can't spend the levy funding, so it's going into a big black hole. So if you look at Newcastle for instance, they pay 1.2 million into the levy pot, and at the moment over three, or two years, or whatever, they can expect to maybe spend £300,000. So that's a lot of money going into that, and the health authorities the same, and various other. But there's organizations now looking at it with regards to how can they spend it? How can they, it would be good to see new people coming into apprenticeships, as opposed to existing employees. So the whole ethos of it is to increase the number of people taking apprenticeships.

PRO06: Not only existing employees, but to also future employees. But at the moment the balance is one way, understandably. But small

companies, they've got an issue with regards to understanding it, and understanding it and how to introduce it, and just the whole way of actually just running it really. You know? And the returns are a nightmare as well. So there's lots of things there which, it's not easy.

Interviewer: In terms of planning, in terms of the plan, due, check, act academic process there's, the literature suggests that employers are more likely to be undertaking planning and doing, and that they don't always actually check and review what has been done. I'm just wondering whether you think that, do you think that the levy as a funding pot, is making any difference to the planning activity that organizations are undertaking?

PRO06: I think the whole thing with regards to the levy, and apprenticeships, if you look at, I'm not talking about level six here, but if you look at level five, the whole checking process is to ensure that that planning process has actually taken place. With regards to the, for instance, off the job, so that people are getting real off the job. So inspectors are actually going in now, asking employees who are on degree apprenticeships, are they, what percentage are off the job? And is it real off the job sort of work that they're doing?

PRO06: So for instance, if they're working in an evening, two hours, doing some work, with regards to their apprenticeship, are the companies allowing them to go in later the next day? So really it's, I think, especially when the inspections' kind of kick in, I think the planning, and I hope this is the answer, I'm answering the question. But I think that it will force the employers to look more at the planning process than what they did before the levy. Because basically what's happening is, there's a claw back of the funding, so if they've got X amount for training X apprentice, and

that apprentice is, for whatever reason, working hours that they shouldn't be, then that money's clawed back.

Interviewer: Do you see employers undertaking formal needs analysis to work out the relevancy of the program to an individual, or to ascertain an individual's training needs, and then to map that to a potential program. Do you see that happening?

PRO06: I think that the TNA do take place, especially in large companies. Not so much in small companies. Basically it's a needs basis, it's a needs, you know, we've got a need for a machinist or whatever, we need to get that skill, because there's a new job comes up. So it's reactive in some ways. But I think going forward, that it's all part and parcel of the process. If you look at the university for instance, they're taking on an apprenticeships training manager, because basically they're looking at the training needs of existing employees but also employees coming in to various areas, whether it's not only in business, but also in the engineering side as well.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. Where the organizations undertake the training needs analysis, is it in your experience, do the employers undertake that analysis themselves, internally? Or have you witnessed them using a training needs analysis from outside of the company, or indeed the provider? For example, UCQ being involved, or undertaking that process?

PRO06: I think there's an area there that UCQ could actually get involved in, to carry out the TNAs. Because it's always, I think it's always good to, and I see this quite often, where external companies go in and do a TNA analysis of what the companies requirements are, and the needs are for going forward, especially with small companies. You know, the small company, I think there's an

avenue there that we could explore, with regards to moving forward.

PRO06: So I think that's an area that UCQ could be involved in. And also external assessment, assessment for people going through the gateway, and I think there's an opportunity there for UCQ to move forward, and actually have those assessors trained in order to run training courses for organizations that may wish to do their own, who are not involved in the program. But I think there's an area there that, I think there's a void there of assessors. And I think organizations, such as universities, such as health authorities, such as banking and what have you, will be looking for support and for assessors. And that's why City & Guilds are now basically taking over training organizations, so they can get their foot in the door in that particular areas. EAL and Emta Awards Limited do it as well as, of course the CMI. You know? So I think there's a market there.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. I mean, the literature suggests that employers are looking for a financial return for everything that they invest in, which would include employee learning. I'm just wondering if that is your experience? And if it is, how employers can measure that?

PRO06: That's a difficult question.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO06: It's, so far as value for money, if that employee can give added value over two years. There's one company I used to work with, they said that if they got a return after two years of training then as far as they were concerned, that was a tick in the box. So that was value for money. Some people send people on courses, and they want immediate return when they actually come back. And I'll quote engineering here, I hope you don't mind, that's an area

that maybe is a bit of a case where it's using CNC machines, 3D printing and whatever. But they're wanting returns pretty much straight away on that.

PRO06: Whereas other organizations, which I've worked with, they see, for instance if an apprentice goes in from a university or whatever, then they're looking at maybe two years to get return from that person; they don't expect that person to be up and running from day one. And there's the other aspects as well with regards to identifying and acknowledging existing skills and if those actually fit in with the standard. And if that person hasn't got any relevant qualifications then this might just support. By the way, that helps to sell the product overseas as well. Cause if you're dealing with American markets or whatever, they very much, or the Chinese, they very much like qualifications. So whether they've got PhD's, or whether they've got Masters, or whether they got their degrees, they kind of look at that when they start to possibly, to look at working with a company.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I think also, you know, in terms of that return, it perhaps is related to the needs in the first place. So in an engineering company, the training needs analysis maybe more of a performance analysis approach. Where there is perhaps, there not performing, or producing, what they should be producing or performing, how they should be performing. So that they perhaps can see a quicker, they can see evidence more quickly of that as a result of training. Whereas if it's an organization task person training needs analysis model, that is more about the individual person and what they're doing, it's a harder thing to measure.

PRO06: I think you're right, but I also think that now companies are looking at the internet of things. So basically looking at a bit of kit, looking

at the person who's running that bit of kit, and looking at the performance of that, and where the shortfalls are. You know, whether that person's not competent in that particular area, or whatever. I can remember people going around with a pad, watching you doing the work, and seeing areas where you may need skills. But through PDR's as well, you know you identify your skills gaps, and the products that you take on. So it depends on what product you're manufacturing, you may have a skills' gap in that, which you may have to look at.

PRO06: But the internet of things now, that seems to be the buzzword of things, and various things that are actually, is going on in that area. It's interesting that they're looking at not only the product; if you look at Nissan, how they're looking at how they can get that car out quicker, does that involve reviewing the TNAs? Does it involve looking at the skills of their staff? Does it require higher skilled staff? You know, all that sort of thing. To look at, that machine's been switched on, and identifying how long in the day that machine's been running. So is the guy having a cup of coffee? Or is he having problems setting it up? And all this thing. So this is, they're using the internet of things now I think to [crosstalk 00:14:22].

Interviewer: In terms of training itself, and in terms of how it's evaluated. I mean have you seen any evidence of how companies can evaluate the impact of training? Do you think they can measure it?

PRO06: They can measure it because in the early days when we started, remember we did a big program down at where?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

PRO06:   GlaxoSmithKline, and we did a big program down there, and there was financial return.

Interviewer: Right.

PRO06:   You know? So where the, we trained the employees business improvement, and team building, and various other things, and we then identified through that, that they could perform better by having a central store system from, not central store, store system within the various companies as opposed to not having, having them go to London. So basically there's a financial return there of a couple of million on that. So yeah, I think that, you can see a financial return there.

PRO06:   And also people's performance, people are happier at work. You know? So you can see people are wanting to stay back, and work on various areas. It's not just about getting paid, but it's about being informed, and seeing, getting the products out the door. And seeing new products being developed and what have you. So fun at work really. So yeah, they can see returns there.

PRO06:   It's very difficult to quantify the outlay of what you pay out, and what you get back in. You know? If the employee is happy, and is performing, and the sickness is not sky high, and people aren't going off with stress, then you're doing something right. You know? And I think investing in people I think is so important. I mean I, over the years, I've identified areas where I've got weaknesses, not weaknesses, where I need to enhance my skills. And that's been very useful as I move from career to career.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Do you think that, in your opinion, how do you see the apprenticeship levy? Do you see it as a private source of funding? Or as a public fund?

PRO06: Again, it's interesting that, when you say public fund or private fund, can you just expand on that?

Interviewer: Yeah, I'm just wondering how you personally see it. Do you see it as a fund that employers are paying into, and employers can then spend, and that it's essentially private sector money? Or do you see it as money that is public money coming from-

PRO06: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, from the government or from public?

PRO06: I think that, I go back a long way, so basically it was a different name in those days, but employers were actually putting something into the pot for training. I think what really needs looked at is how companies can spend that money. I think that possibly needs to be looked at in so far as-

Interviewer: But do you personally think of it as a private fund or a public fund?

PRO06: I think it's private.

Interviewer: Do you think that that makes a difference in terms of what the expectations are? What your expectations are, and what employer expectations, and learner expectation are, in terms of who should benefit from the funding? Whether the actual program should benefit the employer, if it's a private fund, as opposed to benefiting the wider society?

PRO06: Well if you look at the whole thing about the levy, which you've got to kind of broaden the standards. So basically if you look at the standards, it's basically driven by employers, which is then driven down to the employee. So basically at the end of the day, it's the employer who has come up with the standards where the levy has got to be spent, which at the end of the day, benefits the

company. So it benefits the company, and all being well, the employer benefits, and the employee should benefit from that because they will be getting extensive skills hopefully, which will help them get up the, if you like, the pyramid of learning.

PRO06: The thing is, it's a case of, some companies out there saying, "Look we need to spend this money, and we've got this much which we're putting in. We've got to spend this money." So it's forcing a number of people who are maybe not looking at their people, to actually look at it. Now whether that is detrimental to them taking additional people on, because it's, the stats show that the number of apprenticeships within engineering went down, it didn't go up when the levy came in. So there's something wrong there. So that needs to be looked at.

Interviewer: Some of the literature suggests that universities, and university centers, should be engaging in activities that help students to become better members of society. I'm just wondering whether, in your personal experience, that's something that employers have mentioned, that sort of civic or social responsibility? Or whether learners have mentioned it at all? Or whether instead they focus on what is right for the employer and the learners?

PRO06: I think for the social aspect, I think Newcastle, it's very much been that, you know?

Interviewer: Yup.

PRO06: For the social side, they've, especially within the Newcastle area, these social aspects of things. And in a lot of ways that is actually passed down to the students. It's, again it's quite a broad question that, with regards to-

Interviewer: I know Newcastle is a civic university, and takes that civic-ness-

PRO06: Very seriously.

Interviewer: Yeah. Very, very seriously. And keeps repeatedly repeating that, and how important it is to them. So I was just wondering, in contrast at UCQ, do you think that for on a degree apprenticeship that that civic mindedness and civic-ness is equally as important? Or do you think it's a different thing on a degree apprenticeship?

PRO06: I think it's equally important actually.

Interviewer: Okay.

PRO06: I think it's equally important. I think depending what areas, I think it's, yeah, I think it's equally important.

Interviewer: In terms of awareness of the program, and in particular the idea that there needs to be a tripartite between the provider, the employer, and the learner. I'm just wondering if, in your experience, if you think that UCQ is developing and maintaining those tripartite arrangements effectively?

PRO06: I think that systems from when I first got involved, when we discussed the concept of actually moving forward, I think this last year we've moved a good way towards that, from where we were at this time last year. So I think it would be interesting to see in another year, where we will be. But I think we are working towards that at the moment and the staffing policy, and everything else that has been involved in moving this program forward from when we got approval by, or you, to actually go with it, to what we are now. I think it has been a 100% improvement from where we were maybe about a year ago.

Interviewer: Great. Do you think that the on-program activity is suited towards learners who are employed full time?

PRO06:   I think it's excellent.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Great.

PRO06:   I think that is excellent. I think the model is excellent, I think quite rightly, I think universities, especially the Russell Group universities, are looking at this very carefully with the levy, and degree apprenticeships. Because a lot of universities are not set up for that. Some of the old polytechnics are set up, but it's interesting that some universities are not running with it. It used to be the old polytechnics, they've stopped their day release provision.

PRO06:   And if you're looking at what employers are looking for, they're looking for flexibility. They don't want the traditional sort of year out. 'Cause there are various models aren't there. If you look at Newcastle for instance, the Power Degree, they're going up very, very carefully at the moment. But if you look at the Power Degree it's a year, and then it's semesterised after that. So it's a year full-time in the university, going back maybe at Easter. And I think that what we're doing here with the model that we've got, is ideal. It fits in with other organizations where people can have once a month, or whatever, they can have the tutorials. And then they can go back to the workplace, and look for the evidence, and put that into practice and actually capture that.

PRO06:   So I think the model that we've got, the once a month or whatever, is a good model to have. It works in other areas. Depending on what sector you're working at, maybe some people look for day release, but I think the model that we're running here, whether it's a Friday ... I know my daughter's doing, she's doing a degree, she's doing, it's on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday, every month. So she does Friday night, Saturday and Sunday, and that's over

three years. And that seems to work as well. So basically that's the model, and people have signed up for that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO06: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO06: So I think the model's good.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ's CMDA program is sufficiently contextualized to employers? Do you think it's over contextualized? Or under contextualized?

PRO06: I think it's, having taught on the program, but I feel that it's about right at the moment. But time will tell from the students, when we get the feedback from the students, and more feedback from the students.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO06: As time goes on.

Interviewer: Yes.

PRO06: So with any program you review the program, you ensure that it's right for the students, and the employer as well. At the end of the day it's the student experience. I'm all for students' experience. No matter what, with regards to the employers, I think you've got to maintain the student experience, and that they get a good experience with whatever they're doing. And if it's, and I think if the employer, and if the employee, see that it fits into what they're doing within the workplace, that's excellent as well. And I think what we've set up here is going a long way to doing that.

Interviewer: Do you think that delivery staff at UCQ, do you see them as being more academic, or more practical applied, or a mixture?

PRO06: I think it is a mixture really. I think it's important that you've got somebody who's got the, when they go in to see them, they've got that ... What's the word? Where you, I'm trying to think of the word here for it. But, the credibility. So when you go in front of somebody you've got that credibility, you've been there, you've done it, you've got the experience. And okay, you've got the qualification, but I'm a big person, that's saying if somebody's got a PhD, and they haven't got that credibility but they can teach the project. Or you've got somebody who's got a BEng for instance, and they can go in there, been there, done it, then I would always go for the person who's done that, rather than the PhD.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

PRO06: I always, that's when I've employed people in the past, even though I've wanted the higher qualification, it's what the person goes in, because that person can then relay their experience to whoever they're teaching. You know? So I think that is important. So and, it's a mix of both. But then they can't teach if they don't have a teaching qualification. And they will need to be subject educated a level above the one they teach, so it's complicated.

Interviewer: And then in terms of the work relevance, and how important is that, do you think, to learners and employers, that it is relevant to their employment?

PRO06: I think it's important because then it motivates. So it's like taking a horse to water, you know? Some employers might say, "Oh they've got to do this." And force them to do it. But I think if the employees see the benefit, it makes learning easier, and it gives them the motivation into doing. I mean what motivated me was,

when I first kicked off, if I can quote an example. I started off on a technical engineering apprenticeship, which was five years. And at the end of that five years, to get into the drawing office/the design office, I had to have a higher qualification. My motivation was to, that was something I wanted to do. I didn't want to, I would have got more money working on the shop floor. I would, the incentive was I could have stopped, and not done any exams and got a higher pay, and I went to drawing office because that's an area I wanted to work in. You know? 'Cause I wanted, I was a design engineer, I can see that I wanted to, that's what I wanted to do. And that motivated me into learning. Yeah.

Interviewer: And in terms of, social mobility gets talked about quite a bit, and you've just mentioned an example there about starting off in an apprenticeship and then undertaking a degree. In terms of social mobility, do you think that the degree apprenticeships are furthering that social mobility agenda in a positive way?

PRO06: Depends what area. Depends where you come from. So what I'm saying there, if you're talking about social mobility, yeah I think it's supporting it, but I think it's in the early days at the moment.

Interviewer: Do you think that's an influencing factor for employers, or for learners, or for UCQ? Do you hear people talking about doing positive things in terms of social mobility, or supporting people who wouldn't traditionally go, or wouldn't otherwise go to university? Do you think it's an important thing?

PRO06: I think that if you've got ambition, and if you want to, and as long as the companies have that progression outline in their training needs analysis, when they're in the company, then people say, "If I get this, this is an area that I can actually go into." And also as well, because the standards are not for any one organization, that

they're across the sectors, so that gives the person who may not have been looking at it in the past, the opportunity to think, "Well that's something I can have a goal to go towards." And also it's one where, it's not as I said, you could transfer into, cross fertilization into other areas, you know? Such as whether you're going from aerospace or into automate, you can use basically the same qualification, the same standard, to actually move on to other areas.

Interviewer: Just going back to a point that you made about day release. I'm just wondering how, whether the 20% off the job requirement within an apprenticeship, whether it's a barrier to participation? Either to participation, or for people to remain on the program?

PRO06: I think it is for SME's, I think that's an issue. I think for larger companies not so much. But for a smaller company, the 20% is possibly an issue. And that comes back to the individual, the employee, wanting to proceed to get up that pyramid, to get a qualification, to see the benefit, and what's going to come out of that person doing that. But I think for a larger company, they'd possibly be able to manage it a lot better than a smaller company. A Fred in his Shed organization, where basically you're doing, you'd say, "I wanted 20%, I've got to go to university tomorrow." Or whatever. Or, "By the way I'm going to be working on this bit." And this comes back to what I said before there.

PRO06: And this is what SFA are actually looking at, especially at level five, because as you know, Ofsted don't go into level six but level five qualifications, they're looking at this 20% in great detail. And how you capture that, how does the employee capture that, and how does the employer capture that 20% off the job, because this is what Ofsted are going to be looking at. When they go to talk to an employee and say, "Well okay you've done that, when did you

do that? And oh by the way, did you get that time back? When did you get that time back?" You know, for that. So it's something which is something that needs to be looked at and captured.

Interviewer: Is your impression of delivery staff at UCQ, do you see them more as assessors working with students, or do you get the impression that it is quite an inspectorial approach?

PRO06: I think assessors, my understanding, we've grown very quickly, so it's difficult for me to give out, unless I start talking to the actual assessors. Some of them I don't know, but my impression so far is that they're working with the individual employees, as opposed to what you said before, the other way. But as I said, it's difficult for me to answer that because I don't know, unless I go out and see what they're actually doing within the workplace, it's a difficult one for me to answer.

Interviewer: Do you think it's a balancing act for UCQ as an organization, and also for delivery staff in particular, to get a balance between working with the students, and then having to mark their work?

PRO06: It's, you've got to have that when you're lecturing or whatever, you've go to have that professionalism. You're working with them, but you're working with them to succeed. So what you're doing is, the student, or the employee, will either take onboard what you're saying, or they don't. And if they don't, then they shoot themselves in the foot, basically. So it's styles really. I always work with students, I always work with them. If they listen to what I say, then they do very well, and if they don't, they don't do very well.

PRO06: So basically it's a case of ensuring that you're working with the students, and giving your experience, and delivering the module, relaying any sort of personal experience within, when you're teaching that module, not just talking to the board all the time, but

actually giving examples, real examples, where this comes in. And also as well, if the person who is delivering has an understanding of the company, and what the company's about, that supports as well. You know? So it's important you have that background information on the company, what the company's about, and do that research on the company to see how you can then, and how the module that you're teaching then, can impact on what the employee is going to be doing in the workplace.

Interviewer: Do you think that, in terms of taking that just a step further, do you think that UCQ as a provider, has strong industrial links with employers?

PRO06: I think the employers that we've got on board at the moment, the sectors that we've got on board at the moment, I think that we've got a good relationship, I think it can be expanded.

Interviewer: Do you think that it's, yeah. So sort of I'm reading into that, that you think it's important that UCQ should have strong employer links?

PRO06: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO06: And that comes from the industry advisory board. So the industry advisory board, or industry advisory panel, is a big part of actually supporting and moving UCQ forward, and giving advice. And the terms of reference for that is important. And it doesn't become a talking shop, basically that becomes support in how we deliver the curriculum, how we move forward and that, in the sectors that we should be looking at. So we do not have all our eggs in one particular sector basket.

Interviewer: Yes. So my final question, my final area of questioning, is related to this idea of place based. So it goes back to something that you said earlier about Newcastle University; that Newcastle University is an example of a university that is both of a place and for a place. So it is of Newcastle, but it is also for the benefit, and you said about that, it's important that it socially provides benefits to the social area of Newcastle. And that is very much a thing, not just amongst the red brick or civic university, but certainly amongst the post '92 polytechnics as well.

Interviewer: They were definitely of a place and for a place. And there are suggestions that we might be losing that, or in some cases we may already have lost that within some institutions, that they might now just happen to be place based, and it's irrelevant because they have students from all over the globe, or they deliver in multiple areas, so that they've lost that for a place focus. What I'm wondering is really, when you have the degree apprenticeships, and in particular when you have a national employer such as Santander, do you think that it matters to Santander where the provider is based, or whether therefore, the provider is supporting. Do you think it's more important perhaps that the provider is supporting an industry, rather than an area, a geographical area?

PRO06: I think it's in the, they like tick two boxes, but I think the main one is for the company, you know? And it's for that sector, rather than the social side. I know that's Newcastle, and very much for the local. But we've got, or Newcastle have got the Singapore, they've got places all over the place, and the students come from all over the world. 45% of the students now graduating in mechanical's, will now stay in the Northeast after graduating. 45, that's in engineering, so 45. And that's gone up from 18, sorry, 24% in 2011. So that's an interesting stat for the mechanical side of

things. But yeah, I think companies, especially with the levy - the interesting thing is with regarding the levy, if you look at research it's seeing that there's more uptake on existing employers than new employers. So that's something that needs to be addressed I think.

Interviewer: Just one final point then, do you see, as employers such as Santander are getting more involved in the program, which it appears that they are in terms of being involved in the development of the degree standards, and what the learning outcomes are to an extent. I mean I know it's under the QAA benchmarks, but certainly employers are getting involved in the creation of the standards.

PRO06:   They have to.

Interviewer: And if they're also getting involved in the delivery, and determining who delivers, and how it is delivered, and how it is assessed in some cases. You may or may not have thought of this already, but I'm just curious to know whether you think that things are changing within higher education, and that those employing organizations are essentially becoming a part of the university, or part of the higher education institution?

PRO06:   I, my experience and observation so far, is that if you look at ... I'm just trying to think of an example here. If you look at Newcastle, if they're offering a degree, the degree, you got the degree and then you go through the end of point assessment, and you've got that, so that people that are actually doing the end point assessment, and whether the person has got their qualification may be different. You know? And that's got to be written into the standard. Because at the end of the day, the degree is only a part of the degree apprenticeship. So it's basically how are you going

to, it's got to be written into your plans on how you're going to actually assess those people to get them through the gateway. And that could be their portfolio of evidence, could be seen from day one, right the way through. I don't think I'm answering the question.

Interviewer: No, no. Let me ask it in a slightly different way blyecause what I'm asking is around almost the future of universities. And so university is traditionally seen as a place where students went to. And it seems that increasingly certain UCQ's experience of delivering on the CMDA is that employers want us to go to them. So the question really is-

PRO06: Oh yes.

Interviewer: Are the employers becoming the universities of the future? Not necessarily applying to become a university, but are they essentially becoming that place of higher education learning?

PRO06: That's a really good question. That is a really good question which I haven't really thought of. I mean at the end of the day, I still think there will be students, and young students, I'm talking about here up to 22 or whatever, maybe a bit, I've got one, he's 39, in fact actually 40, and they wanted to have that student experience going to a university, and studying full time at a university. Not going to a company. So you'll still have that cohort of people who are wanting to do that.

PRO06: And you'll have those people who, and it's going to be parent influencing probably, their children, they say, "I want you to find a company that will take you on to, will take you through this training, and through this qualification as such." At the end of the day, the standards are written in conjunction with higher education training establishments. It's not the training

establishments or the universities writing the degree apprenticeships, its driven by industry. Industry will need to manufacture widgets, will have to do whatever they've got to do to and have the infrastructure to do that. I can't see in my lifetime, which is hopefully it's a few years, but in my lifetime that they will become the universities.

PRO06: They'll be able to become the providers for organizations like UCQ, to deliver what they're wanting, which they've actually sat down with people like ourselves, and looked at the standards, getting involved in writing the standards. But I can't see the companies being the forefront. At the end of the day, they're saying, "We will choose UCQ, or we'll go to Northumbria." So they'll have that, and whether it's an integrated degree, or whether it's non-integrated, it all comes into the equation. But I think that personally, I think companies will do what they do best depending on the, the big challenge is SME's. You know, the non-levy payers.

Interviewer: But in terms of that, co-creation of both program creation and co-creation of knowledge in the workplace, I'm still going to leave it open that perhaps university's not actually becoming ... Sorry, organizations and employers, not actually necessarily becoming universities, although I know the likes of Dyson are starting up their own institute.

PRO06: Oh yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: And I mean something slightly different, almost as if there really is a place for higher education within the workplace, because traditionally there definitely wasn't. You know?

PRO06: If you look at the, I'll quote stats in engineering. There's more companies actually looking at post graduate MScs, Masters, than the degree apprenticeship.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

PRO06: Right? I'm talking about engineering at the moment. The surveys that are talking to companies, are the British Engines of this world, that train up to a certain level, to level five. And then there may be, the smaller number going on to do a higher, and then what they do at the moment is they employ those people, people who've done an undergraduate course, or a post graduate.

PRO06: Newcastle, are having far more inquiries at the moment in the particular area of engineering for post graduate, rather than undergraduates. That may change. I know in civil engineering they're really looking for level six type provision. So that's in civil, but it's in pockets. Digital is another area which is a big one. But I think the, Dyson is, the Dyson center in Newcastle and Newcastle University, so they're working closely with the university on research and what have you. So they've got their own suite of offices in there. So yeah, I agree with what you're saying there, but I think that there's, where UCQ can come in is supporting these companies, going along to trailblazers, getting involved in the trail blaze, and moving things along that way.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PRO06: I don't know.

Interviewer: I mean I've asked all the questions that I have. Is there anything that you think that I should have asked, and that you want to add?

PRO06:   I think you've covered a few things. I think it's the expenditure of the levy, the spending of the levy, I think that is something that needs to be reviewed and looked at. You know, with regards to possibly supporting the payment of existing people that got in, to have that time off the job, using that levy pot to do that. Is that something that you've considered within your research?

Interviewer: I've certainly looked at the tensions around the off the job, and how that's recorded, and who has responsibility for that. Whether it's the employer, the learner, or increasingly the provider. And then in terms of the funds, it's difficult really to know which predictions are accurate. I mean we've got the statistics on exactly how much of the levy has been spent, and it's a very small amount of the money that's gone in over the two years. Then if you look at an individual employer, the vast majority of employers that I'm aware of, haven't spent their levy.

Interviewer: You mentioned Newcastle University and the NHS as prime examples of that, certainly the NHS is a very big example of that. But then you've got, last week the Institute for Apprenticeships putting out a projection that the levy's going to be half a billion pounds overspent by 2021. So it's hard to know quite, well do we go by the reality of the situation as it is, or do we believe the Institute for Apprenticeships that it's really taking off? And because of the longer duration programs, and the higher value standards, that in fact it is gonna be massively overspent. It's hard to know.

PRO06:   I think so. And I think that when I'm, again talking to companies, that they would like to see, and there's been a lot of lobbying being done on this, on how that money is actually spent. So that's something that is being discussed.

Interviewer:	Yeah.

PRO06:	Some interesting questions that you've asked [crosstalk 00:51:36].

Interviewer:	Yeah. Thanks for that.

PRO06:	Yeah.

Interviewer:	Okay, I'm gonna.

8.3.2 Learner interview transcripts

8.3.2.1 LER01

Learner responses from notes

Interviewer: In terms of this sort of recent announcement for non-levy payers, or for people with a levy account who go over their balance. This announcement, well certainly for the small employers, of a reduction from the 10% co-investment to 5%; as an employee, do you think that that's going to have any impact? Do you think it would have made any difference to UCQ investing in your program if they were paying 5% rather than 10%?

LER01: 10% investment – I'm not sure this makes a difference regarding training that small businesses would not normally engage with. If a small business does not normally employ apprentices, I don't think this investment rate would motivate them to go down this path.

Interviewer: Do you think there should be an employer co-investment, or do you think it should be removed altogether?

LER01: Yes. I like the fact that my employer is investing in me.

Interviewer: As a learner on the program, have you seen the apprenticeship levy making a difference?

LER01: Yes, I believe so. Employers are now forced to focus their attention and training budgets on apprenticeships rather than other work-based training initiatives

Interviewer: Do you think the levy will continue? Do you think it'll be here to stay or do you think it's going to be a short-term thing?

LER01:   I think it's here to stay.

Interviewer: Do you think it should be increased from a half a percent?

LER01:   Maybe. If it is a success.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on, there seems to be some negative press around the funding of the higher management, the degree apprenticeship such as the one that you're on. There is some negative press around that and I just wonder; do you think that the degree apprenticeship should be funded through the levy? Do you think they are a true apprenticeship?

LER01:   I think the employer should be able to choose.

Interviewer: Do you think the degree apprenticeship is very similar to a normal degree, if you like, a non-degree apprenticeship or do you think it is wildly different or widely different?

LER01:   It is very different. You couldn't study my last degree whilst in full time employment.

Interviewer: In terms of just thinking about the Deming Plan-Do-Check-Act process, literature suggests that companies often undertake the planning and the doing, but don't often check and review what is happening. I'm just curious to know whether the levy has an impact on that and whether the new funding regime has any impact on either the planning of training, and/or the reviewing of it. In terms of the program that you're on, do you see any more planning and review process than on a non-fund program or is it much the same?

LER01:   As my non-levy employer is also my training provider, the training is regularly planned and reviewed as a matter of natural reflection and development. The co-contribution rate has actually

decreased for non-levy employers since I began my apprenticeship.

Interviewer: In terms of when your employer was presenting the course as an option; did they undertake a formal training needs analysis or was it less formal, or was it informal, and did you as an employee have any input in that process?

LER01: Before I started my apprenticeship, I do not believe formal needs mapping with regards to staffing and business skill gaps were undertaken.

Interviewer: Was a training analyst involved?

LER01: We do not use an external training needs analyst. Any needs mapping is done in-house.

Interviewer: I mean, the economic literature suggests that employers will always expect a financial return for any service that they provide or any service that they invest in. I'm just curious to know what your opinion is of that as an employee? Do you think it's realistic or possible to measure a financial return on investment? Do you think that your employer has given any real thought to a financial return on investment for your participation on the program?

LER01: I believe having a return on investment is essential for all employers. I'm not sure how best this can be measured. It may be interesting to use some kind of staff survey that questions staff about the specific capabilities and support provided to them by their manager (even manager with no formal quals vs manager who has undertaken the CMDA/formal quals). These results could then be measured against General Staff Satisfaction survey results which could be divided up by teams (so we know who the manager is of which team and can perhaps see a correlation

between: no formal management training > lower confidence in management capabilities and support > lower levels of general satisfaction and productivity). Obviously, this would be very sensitive info and need to be kept confidential

Interviewer: Do you think that your employer has a measure of any sort of financial return on investment?

LER01: I would refer back to my last answer.

Interviewer: In terms of the apprenticeship levy itself, I'm asking what your personal opinion is, whether you perceive it as being a source of public finance or private finance?

LER01: Private

Interviewer: Do you think it makes any difference whether it's perceived as being ... Would it make any difference to you if you perceived it as being a private fund rather than a public fund? What I mean is, in terms of who the likely beneficiaries are. There's literature that suggests that when there is public money that is paying for education, that both the public funder and the students being supported through the public fund, that both are looking to get a social or civic return. So I'm curious to know whether you've given any thought to - if you perceive it as a public fund, are you looking for you personally to make a social or civic return as a result of you being on the program?

LER01: Whoever pays should see the largest return on investment. I'm still paying off my student loan, I couldn't have paid for this course.

Interviewer: In terms of yourself on your learning journey, do you consider yourself to be a lifelong learner?

LER01: Yes I would.

Interviewer: Do you think that there have been barriers that have prevented you from participating in learning previously?

LER01: For me, undertaking the CMDA has removed previous barriers to further study. Previously, barriers such as losing income due to study commitments, time outside of work and the cost of training prevented me from undertaking new study that was more relevant to my career

Interviewer: Do you think that your ego is helping you do better on the course or does it in any way limit you?

LER01: A colleague and I have an ongoing friendly but egotistical competition to see who has the highest marks. I see this as a positive motivator and also a way to bring us closer together on the programme as we help each other as well. I already have a 2:1 [degree]. There's no way I would want to get a lower grade on this one.

Interviewer: Let me just ask you about the deliverers on the course. I mean, do you of think the delivery staff as being academics or tutors, or facilitators?

LER01: There is a difference them at [my previous] University we attended lectures in lecture halls and there was no way of interacting with them. Here the classes are interactive and inclusive; you have to be involved, there's nowhere to hide! So long as they are competent and engaging I do not mind what their title is.

LER01: That's a hard question, the more I think about it, I mean in some ways yes. UCQ doesn't have any professors. But I don't know if it means the course is any less good. It is more work centered, and the staff reflect that.

Interviewer: In terms of the sort of work relevance, are you satisfied that the course is directly relevant to your work?

LER01: This is important to me as it makes my student and work life easier. It also reduces the time involved in research and assignment work if I can make immediate links to my day to day work

Interviewer: Could I just ask on a very different one, going back and just considering barriers and so on. Have you given any thought to whether the degree apprenticeships further social mobility?

LER01: I believe I am already very fortunate in my own social mobility so this has not been a big influencing factor for me.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. In terms of there's a lot of talk, and there's a lot of press around the 20% off the job element. I'm just wondering whether for you as a learner on the program you've seen that as a barrier in any way?

LER01: Not for me, however I have a supportive employer.

Interviewer: It potentially makes life more difficult for the delivery staff in terms of those contextualized assignments, but what I'm hearing is, though, it's better for the learner and it's better for the employer, perhaps, as well. In terms of UCQ as a provider, do you see them having strong industrial links or not? I mean with employers.

LER01: Yes I believe so. This can be done through the development of an employer/industry advisory group; employer representative on the governing board and the professional development of HE staff to keep abreast of industry standards and new ways of working.

Interviewer: Do you think UCQ understand employer and employees?

LER01:   Yes.

Interviewer: I've got one final area of questioning, which is related to this idea of being placed based. It's exploring - if you look at universities, the civic universities and then, also, polytechnics as they were, they were considered to be both of a place and for a place. What I mean by that is they were both ... Say, for example, Newcastle Polytechnic was based in Newcastle, very much also for the benefit of Newcastle. So it was looking to have an impact on the businesses in the surrounding Newcastle areas. It was very much focused on supporting local employers, and employees to go to work with those employers. Similarly, Newcastle University, as an example, as a civic university - very high on its agenda was the need to support the social and civic side of Newcastle.

Interviewer: So these institutions, they're established in particular areas or cities, and they support those cities. So they're both of the place and they're for the place. What I'm curious to explore, really, is with the degree apprenticeships it seems that potentially there is a difference now because you've now got national employers who may wish to engage with a national provider. Now, historically, the universities they are not usually national providers. They're torn between their heritage, which is of a place and for a place. And now the degree apprenticeship provision, which if an employer is looking for a national provider, either the universities have to change and become national providers or new and alternative providers, such as UCQ, will come in and deliver nationally. I'm just wondering if you have any views on that?

LER01:   I'm not sure how to answer this question.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you with UCQ as your provider? I mean, does it matter to you where UCQ are based? I don't mean in terms of the session delivery, but I mean in terms of head office or campus.

LER01: No. As long as the course is accessible. The tutors are accessible.

Interviewer: Do you see the employer? Yes, but do you see the employer as potentially being a suitable place for higher education?

LER01: I haven't thought about it, but maybe. Sort of.

Interviewer: Do you think that the opening up of a virtual campus is something that would support students in their employment?

LER01: That would be awesome!

8.3.2.2 LER02

Interviewer: This is interview LER02. LER02, can I just ask you, so in terms of this sort of recent announcement for non-levy payers, or for people with a levy account who go over their balance. This announcement, well certainly for the small employers, of a reduction from the 10% co-investment to 5%; as an employee, do you think that that's going to have any impact? Do you think it would have made any difference to UCQ investing in your program if they were paying 5% rather than 10%?

LER02:   I think it will have a bearing. However, what I would say is that I don't think it would necessarily persuade people who wouldn't do it at 10% to do it at five because I think that 10% was a very, very good deal anyway. And reducing it to five, if you weren't going to do it anyway, I don't know how much influence reducing it to five will have about convincing people to do it who couldn't going to do it anyway. I think it gives more reason for people who were going to do it anyway to do it, and maybe do more. Maybe put a two people through on one person, you know, that sort of thing, but I think that that type of organization probably already decided to do it at 10 anyway.

Interviewer: Do you think there should be an employer co-investment, or do you think it should be removed altogether?

LER02:   I mean, the whole idea of employer co-investment goes back many years in various different schemes to get employers to invest in their own learning and development, and some have worked. Some haven't. Obviously the levy, they've had to enforce people to put in the levy pot, which they can then get back out. I think that the co-investment should probably remain for the smaller organizations. I think it gives them a little bit more of a

buy-in and ownership, the fact that they are investing, and they'll probably want to get a bit more out of it than they would if they weren't investing at all. Maybe kind of have a bit more scrutiny on "Well, what am I getting for my money?" Even if it is a relatively small amount of money for a kind of higher education program, especially a 5% contribution.

LER02: I mean, thinking back to the days of the fully funded NVQs, and companies didn't really necessarily care too much what they're on, what the learners were on. Obviously, there were situations where people might have been doing two or three, four, five qualifications, and the employer didn't really have that investment buy-in to it. Partly, I would say because they didn't have that financial investment in it, and yeah. I think it should stay to cut a long answer. short

Interviewer: Okay. Thanks there. In terms of the apprenticeship levy, I mean, as a learner on the program, have you seen the apprenticeship levy making a difference?

LER02: To me, personally, in terms of my participation.

Interviewer: Yeah, or too other people, do you think that it is making a difference?

LER02: I think it enables people to do things that they wouldn't necessarily do without the levy. I mean, in the example of organizations who have money taken away from them through the levy tax I think that is something that would create opportunity for their employees to undertake degree-level apprenticeships and other apprenticeships that they wouldn't have if that levy wasn't there.

Interviewer: Do you think the levy will continue? Do you think it'll be here to stay or do you think it's going to be a short-term thing?

LER02: I think because of the fact that it did go through Parliament as a law and as sort of like a bill that was passed and is now enacted in law, rather than just a policy decision, I think it's going to be quite difficult for them to remove even if they wanted to. I mean, if you think back to when they messed around with the VAT rate, and they dropped it to 15%, then upped it, and apparently these things were all temporarily increase it to 20%. You know, like everyone has just forgot about, and it's remained as it is. I think as businesses get used to the fact that this 1/2% of their wage bill is going to be paid annually into this levy pot, they'll just see it as another thing that they pay for and have to account for in their budgeting. I think once if companies don't complain about it, it's probably here to stay.

LER02: If companies start complaining about it, they might look at removing it, but I think it's a relatively small amount, the 1/2%, that will probably be we'll absorb that when they use it for apprenticeships or not.

Interviewer: Do you think it should be increased from a half a percent?

LER02: It depends how much of it gets used.

Interviewer: Do you think if it is a success, then it should be? Yeah?

LER02: Yeah. I do. I think if it's a success and if companies are regularly using up their levy, and then dipping into the contribution, the 90-95% government contribution to it, then it should be increased because it means that there is more demand for it than they're are paying in. Yeah. I think increasing it to, like they do with interest rates, and as I mentioned with VAT, increasing it by another 1/2% and seeing what the impact of that might be. I think that would be something that they should consider if the levy is getting used at

the 1/2% If it's not getting used up the 1/2%, it's almost pointless increasing it.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on, there seems to be some negative press around the funding of the higher management, the degree apprenticeship such as the one that you're on. There is some negative press around that and I just wonder; do you think that the degree apprenticeship should be funded through the levy? Do you think they are a true apprenticeship?

LER02: I suppose there's two sides to it. Whether they are a true apprenticeship is a question I think can be labelled at all levels of apprenticeships, now, pretty much. Not just the degree-level apprenticeships. I mean, the whole terming of apprenticeship in terms of people serving their time as an apprentice learning a skill, learning a job before they're then allowed to do the job properly, going back to the actual definitions of an apprenticeship, which means learning from someone in order to do a particular job and learn particular skills. I don't think that applies to apprenticeships as a whole at the minute in terms of what they are, and I think everything that's been unfairly, I would say, labelled as degree apprenticeships could probably be labelled at any level apprenticeship.

LER02: I do think a degree-level apprenticeship is valid as a thing that exists. Even the master's-level apprenticeships (and they've been talking about Doctoral-level apprenticeships), I think, as long as there is a job role linked to the apprenticeship itself, like the CMDA - it's for a manager or a leader. It's a job. It's an actual physical job. I think as long as they keep that because, obviously, if they remove that, then it's not a worked-based apprenticeship. The second half of that is whether I think degree apprenticeships can

work, is a different question. I don't know if that's one you want me to cover now.

Interviewer: Yeah. Go on. I would be interested to know what you think.

LER02: I mean, this is purely experiential of being on the program and, obviously, kind of being a part of an organization who is delivering it to other people. I think there's a disconnect between what is required to deliver an apprenticeship and what is required to deliver a degree in terms of the regulatory frameworks that exist, the compliance, and the requirements, and the quality elements of both different sides and, also, in the expectations of the students as well. I think the jury is still out. I definitely don't have a particular view either way. I am not necessarily sitting on the bench. I just don't think there has been enough evidence gathered on it, but I'm willing to concede that a degree apprenticeship may not be possible to deliver and to participate in without changing your expectation or making concessions in a number of different places.

Interviewer: Do you think the degree apprenticeship is very similar to a normal degree, if you like, a non-degree apprenticeship or do you think it is wildly different or widely different?

LER02: I think it's wildly - I think obviously the outputs, if you like, the assignments, the work, and things like that, I don't think they are too widely different, but obviously the method, and the vehicle, and the logistics is completely different. I mean, this is talking about the way UCQ deliver it. I know the other universities are delivering it in such a way that is very much aligned to their normal, traditional undergraduate degrees, and kind of traditional MBAs. A lot of the time, the apprentices have to slot into that. Our approach is that because we don't have existing degree provision

for the apprentices to slot into, we've been able to try and come up with a way of delivering the apprenticeship as the apprenticeship, rather than shoehorning an apprenticeship into an existing degree, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: No. Thanks for that.

LER02: I don't want to. I think I haven't fully formed an opinion on that one-

Interviewer: No.

LER02: ... but I do think that our version is different to that of a traditional degree.

Interviewer: No. Thanks for that. I'm just wondering - in terms of just thinking about the Deming Plan-Do-Check-Act process, literature suggests that companies often undertake the planning and the doing, but don't often check and review what is happening. I'm just curious to know whether the levy has an impact on that and whether the new funding regime has any impact on either the planning of training, and/or the reviewing of it. In terms of the program that you're on, do you see any more planning and review process than on a non-fund program or is it much the same?

LER02: Sorry, Interviewer. The audio was just very robotic and cutting in and out there. I didn't really catch-

Interviewer: Okay.

LER02: ... much of that question.

Interviewer: What I'm asking about is in terms of ... I'm exploring whether the funding and the apprenticeship levy have any impact on the planning process for training within an organization such as your employer, and, also, the review process. So whether there's

either a positive or a negative impact as a result of any difference in planning and of reviewing the effectiveness of the program that you run. So comparing this program that you're on with maybe training or education that you've undertaken that isn't funded; do you see any differences in terms of that, either the planning and or the reviewing of the effectiveness of the program that you're on?

LER02: Interviewer can you hear me okay?

Interviewer: I can. Yes.

LER02: Okay. Yeah. Yours is very cutting in and out. Okay. You mentioned in terms of the ... Was it the review and the kind of feedback processes within the degree?

Interviewer: Yes. I'm just curious to know whether they are different to non-funded provision?

LER02: I mean, I can only give you my personal view on that, and kind of anecdotal things that I've discussed with other people in terms of their experiences, is the fact that the way that we're delivering the degree apprenticeship is very much I think we're a lot closer and accessible to provide feedback and advice, and guidance and review progress than a traditional degree would be. An example that somebody said to me is that we where given an email address of one of their lecturers in order to ask them for advice on particular things. I'd like to think that we provide a lot more support. I haven't particularly used all of the support that is available. That's just personal choice.

LER02: I've used it when I felt it necessary, but I know other people have been able to get very quick feedback and sit down one to one sessions in addition to the lectures and the structured content,

which has enabled them to get feedback and have their progress reviewed so that they can improve.

Interviewer: What I'm asking about, though, is something slightly different. I'm asking about the review of the effectiveness of the program.

LER02: Right. I think that was just a consequence of the audio cutting in and out, but it seems to be back now, so I probably missed the first bit because the audio was a bit off. Is it in terms of UCQ ourselves in order to improve all the way that students could feedback to the improvement process for the program?

Interviewer: It's more around ,in terms of the effectiveness of the program in achieving whatever it is that the learner and/or the employer is looking for, and what I'm trying to explore is whether there's any impact or difference as a result of this being funded through the levy and through the apprenticeship standard, to say a program that the employer maybe would just pay for, but it wasn't subject to any sort of public sector controls. I'm just curious to know whether you think there is less or more of the same amount of review of how effective the program is.

LER02: I think from being a student on the program and going through the modules to date, kind of over halfway through year two, every single thing that has been covered has been directly applicable to my job, and I would like to think has, from a personal point of view, exposed me to things I didn't even know existed, and that I can hopefully have started to use, and will continue to use indefinitely to help me be more effective and improve. I think the link between what it's actually giving the employer, I think, could be a bit more robust in order to get a bit more feedback about how it directly ties into their strategic goals in terms of people development and what

they're looking to achieve as a business, and linking the program to that.

LER02: I think having the apprenticeship standard and, obviously, kind of the Chartered Management Institute, kind of the only chartered body for leadership and management. You know, kind of the people with the royal charter. Having their input into the apprenticeship standard itself, and the assessment plan of - this is the specification for a highly effective manager. That's essentially what they're doing. They need to have these skills, this knowledge, and these behaviors in order to achieve it. And setting goals in 12,if I remember correctly, sort of 12 different sorts of sections, and having that directly feed from the chartered body, into something that can be converted into a degree program delivered in the workplace.

LER02: I mean, from my point of view, I think that just seems a very sort of sensible, reasonable and ultimately, hopefully, effective way of doing it, and feeding back, and giving people the skills they require in order to be more effective and, therefore, improve the business. It's almost like it goes that whole circle and is joined up. As opposed to giving people some skills and knowledge in a theoretical sense, and a non-contextualized, non-applied sense, which is the traditional university business schools route I mean, that's a generalization, by the way-

Interviewer: That's fine.

LER02: ... of the perception of what that will be. I would think surely that can't be as directly effective on that person in a job because it hasn't been benchmarked against what the chartered body for leaders and managers say, and have researched, and have lots of publications about what constitutes a manager in the

workplace. Not what the university constitutes someone needing to be a manager in the workplace.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. Can I ask you? I mean, in terms of when your employer was presenting the course as an option; did they undertake a formal training needs analysis or was it less formal, or was it informal, and did you as an employee have any input in that process?

LER02: I'll be honest. I think it was almost like it was kind of, if I remember back, there wasn't in-depth needs analysis done linked to strategic planning and skills gaps, and things like that; however, whilst it was kind of informal not necessarily recorded, it was discussed and determined that it was something that would be a benefit. Maybe not with nothing tangible tied to that, with no real sort of - these are the reasons why, but just generally as a, "Yes this. Because we as an organization believe in it, then that seems obvious that we believe, and if so we should be doing it." I think after two-and-a-half years ... Two-and-a-half years is that right?

Interviewer: Certainly two years.

LER02: A year and a half, a year and a half, yeah. So halfway, through Year 2. A year and a half of actually being on the program, I think the initial thoughts have been proved true and proved right. But I think it was definitely more of an informal thing, and I think that's not to say, and it definitely wasn't an employer saying, "I think we should do this or I want you to do this." It was definitely a kind of, "Yes. That's something that would be mutually beneficial for both myself and the company."

Interviewer: I mean, the economic literature suggests that employers will always expect a financial return for any service that they provide or any service that they invest in. I'm just curious to know what

your opinion is of that as an employee? Do you think it's realistic or possible to measure a financial return on investment? Do you think that your employer has given any real thought to a financial return on investment for your participation on the program?

LER02: I would say that it would seem as if not taking that into account would be something that would be a bit crazy from a purely financial business point of view, taking into account what will doing this do and what is the impact going to be on the business? Converting the impact into, how is it going to actually ... How does that convert into finance and how does that convert into, say, cost savings or what is the financial value of someone being more effective or possessing more knowledge, or having a particular set of behaviors? I know it's definitely something for my employer has definitely been considered. I'm not sure whether it's been worked out how that's possible, and I would say it's especially for management, which is kind of it's a particularly nuanced subject in terms of dealing with people, and different people, and different people's needs.

LER02: And adjusting the way you do things in order to get the best from the teams of people that you're in charge of. How you convert that into figures and finance, I would say that's something which is very, very difficult to do, but it's something that is important to try and at least look at, and try and put a figure on.

Interviewer: Do you think that your employer has a measure of any sort of financial return on investment?

LER02: The answer to that question is I don't know. I know it's something that has been discussed in the past, but I don't know of the exact measures on the financial side.

Interviewer: Okay. Thanks for that. In terms of the apprenticeship levy itself, I'm asking what your personal opinion is, whether you perceive it as being a source of public finance or private finance?

LER02: Having probably a bit more knowledge of the legislation and stuff behind the levy, probably a normal degree apprenticeship student due to the nature of what I do at UCQ is it's public funds the second it leaves the bank account of the company via HMRC, and the legislation is very clear on that that it is public funds. The use of public funds, when it goes back to the company to be used for apprenticeships, is under the same scrutiny as any of the public funds in terms of usage, and making sure that it complies with the use of public funding regulations.

Interviewer: I accept that legally it is a public fund, but do you perceive it as a public fund?

LER02: Yes. I actually do because a lot of it isn't...well, a lot of companies ... I say a lot. I don't know for sure in simple figures, but let's say a big company who has a levy bill of, I'm going to say £2 million, and uses a percentage of that; let's say uses £500,000, and there's 1.5 million pounds worth of unused levy in their pot; that can be taken. It has been taken already by HMRC, but that can be used to supplement other public funds for any organization to access through the provision of apprenticeships. And the idea that once the levy is paid it's no longer yours, but it can be used to pay for apprenticeships, I think the way I perceive that is that is a public fund. It's not their little private pot from which that they can (inaudible).

LER02: It's not like they put a load of money into a bond or some savings account that's theirs, and nobody else can get it. Which in theory they could put £2 million into a savings account or into some

separate bank account, which over time they can then use to pay for training. That would be private funds, whereas, this because of the ... I mean, my perception, to just directly answer the question, of it is that it is public funds.

Interviewer: Do you think it makes any difference whether it's perceived as being ... Would it make any difference to you if you perceived it as being a private fund rather than a public fund? What I mean is, in terms of who the likely beneficiaries are. There's literature that suggests that when there is public money that is paying for education, that both the public funder and the students being supported through the public fund, that both are looking to get a social or civic return. So I'm curious to know whether you've given any thought to - if you perceive it as a public fund, are you looking for you personally to make a social or civic return as a result of you being on the program?

LER02: It's a good question. I would say the politicians, ministers would definitely see it as something which they have created or allowed to happen, or kind of made happen in order to give something to the public, i.e. the employees or people who are there. It comes back to the point that I made before, if the levy wasn't there, would organizations put their staff through degrees? I don't know what the answer would be, but I would be surprised if the answer was, "Yes. They'd do it at the same level as they would with the levy being in place, and organizations put their staff through degrees." But in terms of the numbers going through degree apprenticeships, I would say that is higher because of the levy. For me, from a personal point of view, I haven't thought about it before, so I'm just trying to see that, and form a quick thought.

Interviewer: No. You don't need to provide an answer. I mean, it's been quite interesting on the research because what I've found is that there

seems to be quite a disconnect between when I asked the same question amongst provider staff, amongst learners, and amongst employers. Provider staff who also work at civic universities kind of say, "Yes. Yes. It's absolutely vital. It's such an important part of higher education." When I ask the same question of the employers and learners, they almost don't know why I'm asking the question. It's so far off the radar. So it's not a problem if you don't have an answer. I think it's quite interesting and quite telling in its own right that there is a difference between the different interviewee sets as to what that should be.

Interviewer: There certainly appears to be more thought towards the likely benefits of the program to the member of staff, the learner and, also, to the employer rather than the kind of wider social or civic. I think it's at the heart of one of the differences between civic institutions, universities, and the way they operate, and what they expect, and then a degree apprenticeship. It is such a different thing. It's so much more focused on work. There's no need to have an opinion.

LER02: Just to interject there, an interesting kind of thing, and I don't know if this is possible or whether it exists, is it would be interesting to ask a similar question to students who studied before 1998, who had funding through the local education authorities for degrees through public funds. It'd be interesting to find out whether the view of that social and civic idea has changed since tuition fees were brought in.

Interviewer: Well, the literature suggests that it has. I mean, the literature suggests that as a result of the consumerization and marketization, which is what the student loans have done, putting the student into a position as being the consumer and/or funder of education. The literature there suggests that students who are

paying for their own education are very much looking for a direct return for themselves. So that is through both the choice of career and, also, relating to what their expectations are in terms of grades because there's often a correlation between students who are paying for the program and there's often the suggestion that they would want higher grades, almost as a result of the fact that they're paying for it. They're definitely...

Interviewer: The research that I've done shows a stark contrast between that very popular line of argument and when I've asked the same sort of questions of students on the degree apprenticeship, and asked them, "What is important in terms of what they're looking for from the program?" It seems to be much more geared towards supporting their employer and themselves as a manager. And nobody, not a single student, was looking for or indicated that they were looking for a financial return for them personally, either in the form of a pay raise or of a change of job. I mean, that seems to be such a stark difference between the students who are paying for their program.

Interviewer: I'm just kind of trying to explore and unpick what is so different about the funding of the degree apprenticeship? Because if it is seen as a public fund, then the suggestion would be that students would expect to, and the public funding it, would expect a public return. But because employers are paying for it, albeit through a hypothecated tax, it sort raises the question - are employers generally expecting, not just the ones that have their own students on program, but do employers, are they going to demand that the apprenticeship levy makes a difference to UK PLC, for instance? I'm just exploring that area.

LER02: Sorry, Interviewer. just to let you finish there.

Interviewer: No, no. I was just saying. I'm just exploring that area just to see if there's anything that I can uncover.

LER02: Yeah. One more thing I would throw in, and what you said there around for the benefit of the employer, and the benefit of them in their job. What you mentioned there definitely strikes a chord because that's exactly the view that I have. One other thing and one other view that I have, and one of the, ... Not necessarily a motivating factor, but one of the things I'm hoping to get out of this in addition to helping the employer and helping myself within the job ,is from a personal point of view outside of work, and just generally in life in the way that I sort of deal with certain situations and certain things outside of work as a normal human member of society. That's also something that I'm looking to get out of it as well, in addition to the stuff that's directly applicable to work.

Interviewer: Okay.

LER02: Just that exposure to stuff that I previously didn't have exposure to. Just that wider knowledge and wider understanding of people, the world, and how it all works.

Interviewer: Okay. Thanks for that. In terms of yourself on your learning journey, do you consider yourself to be a lifelong learner?

LER02: Do you know what, I've always enjoyed knowing stuff and learning things. When I was younger, it was you're full of pointless facts. Kind of just come out with a pointless fact, but that's because I've always enjoyed reading things, enjoyed exposing myself to subjects like physics and cosmology, and stuff like that. I haven't really considered myself as a lifelong learner in the way that I would ordinarily perceive it. Maybe kind of now I realize that, "Yes because I've always enjoyed learning stuff, whatever that is." Forgive the word stuff, but it's just a catchall for everything in any

subject. Yes. I do like to know about stuff. It does frustrate me sometimes when I don't know about stuff and I definitely go out of my way to find out about it.

LER02: Be that's just a bit of rudimentary research on the Internet or whether it's going off and reading numerous books over a period of months on a particular subject. Yeah. I think being asked the question directly, yeah. I think I would consider myself a lifelong learner and I definitely want to continue after doing the CMDA. I definitely want to continue doing more formalized learning, as well as the less formal learning, which is what I've been talking about.

Interviewer: Do you think that there have been barriers that have prevented you from participating in learning previously?

LER02: The answer to that question is I don't know. That's not like a ticking don't know. That's a genuine I don't know. I don't know whether the barriers existed anywhere other than with myself. It's never really crossed my mind until recently that I might, this is before the levy and before degree apprenticeships, which is generally - I know I've done qualifications and done like level three management. This is a proven track. It's all the ongoing kind of development, but I've never really considered those as part of an ongoing professional lifelong learning process.

Interviewer: Yet, I mean, they are.

LER02: No. I know they are, but I think the barrier was with myself and my view of those things, the fact that I wasn't considering it as all of these things are going to come together and be a part of my personal development. They were kind of just things that I was doing. Now looking back on that, I can see that now that they were part of what I now see, and what I want to continue doing indefinitely, part of ongoing development. But I think the barrier to

taking this step from just doing a qualification and seeing it as, "Right. This qualification then I'm going to do the next one, then I'm going to do the next one, and then I'm going to do this, and then I'm going to plan it." I think the barrier was with myself. And I think maybe it was the opportunity to do the CMDA maybe came at a time when the barriers were … I was starting to realize that, "Ah, this is something that is part of my personal development or maybe I've just come to that conclusion through being on the CMDA." I don't know the answer.

Interviewer: It sounds as if the development that you have undertaken has been work based. You've done it whilst employed. Is there a possibility that the kind of traditional university experience maybe doesn't suit you, particularly in terms of time or in terms of the kind of practical or the desire to be employed?

LER02: Maybe. I mean, I think that's quite an introspective question. That's something that I think might take a little bit more self inquiry to get to the bottom of. Maybe.

Interviewer: Okay.

LER02: Maybe it's a learning style thing. I tried for a very, very short period of time the traditional university kind of route back in 1997 , was it, or something like that, and very quickly realized it wasn't for me, and went and got a job, and learnt that way, and learned through the informal means, such as reading, and listening to stuff, watching ,back in the days before the Internet. You know the wide span of the Internet watching documentaries kind of on TV, and things like that. Maybe it's something that ... Maybe some things aren't right for an individual and maybe this is kind of ... I've thought about this before for myself is maybe some things are

only right at certain times in people's lives, and they're not right at other times.

LER02: I just don't think that sort of ... I think I was a bit sick after going through school and A levels and stuff like that. I think I was just sick of being in school, and ready to do something else. And going to a university was just basically an extension of school.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think time and timing are barriers equally as much as all sorts of other things, so yeah. On that note in terms of I'm just saying there are challenges in terms of engaging on a qualified program later in life. I mean, there are always challenges. But just in terms of yourself. I'm curious just to explore the idea of ego, and whether it's potentially constructive or destructive in terms of impact? Whether it's challenging for you to undertake a program at this point in your life, whether you feel under pressure?

LER02: I'll be honest with you. Doing this degree at this point in time is probably the bit that has the least pressure for me. I think the pressure of, obviously, the job, kind of having young children and stuff like that. I was talking about this earlier this morning with a colleague, and she had a similar view in terms of being able to get reasonably decent marks on assignments, and thinking that if I'd only put in a bit more effort, I would have got a really good mark. But being able to get a reasonably decent mark, which would put you in a 2-1 degree classification place, really just by kind of not really thinking about it too much and just being able to do it, and get to that level without putting undue pressure on yourself and spending weeks and weeks stressing, and stuff about, "Oh, I've got to get this assignment in and things."

LER02: I don't think about it like that. Maybe I should think about it like that a little bit more, and maybe that will elevate to higher level

grades, which I know it's been spoken about before in terms of my aspirations. I'm not saying expectations. I think at the beginning of the degree course it probably was my expectation that I should. Again, this comes back to the ego thing in your question that I should be able to achieve a first class honors degree. Now that was my expectation, whereas now an aspiration because I realized that nobody has got a divine right just to come along and say, "I want to get a first class honors degree before you've submitted that first assignment." I think that definitely is the ego thing about it.

LER02: But I also think that's the downside of the ego and kind of changing it from an expectation to an aspiration, I think has lessened and taking a bit of the ego away but, also, having a little bit of ego and a little bit of acceptance that I do have just the general level of intelligence to write an assignment that comes out within this 60% bracket, without really spending the amount of time that I would anticipate a traditional undergraduate would spend to come out with the same type of assignment. I think having that knowledge and, again, that was the basis of the conversation. It's like I am I think able to do things that other people may struggle with or may not be able to do in the same way.

Interviewer: I think also what you're describing is a positive personal development as a result of a higher education. I've witnessed that, and this is my opinion, I haven't got the evidence to back it up, but I've witnessed your students approaching a course with an expectation because, it's almost as if when they start the course they start it thinking, "Okay. I'm starting it with a 100% and it's only if I do something wrong that I'm going to get marks deducted." As opposed to students starting the course and saying, "I've got 0% and the only way that I'm going to gain marks is if I'm able to

demonstrate." It's like if people start the course with that 100% position expectation, it's very wrong. It's very flawed because you don't have 100%. You don't start an assignment with 100%. You start it with zero, and anything that you gain is a positive thing.

Interviewer: It sounds to me as if that change from expectation to aspiration is a similar thing to changing it from a starting position of thinking, "I'm 100%, maybe, so I'm going to get knocked down, and I might not get 100," as opposed to starting it with zero and then building it up.

LER02: I don't think about it a lot in that exact way, but it does sort of mirror a little bit. Mine was more just from professional reputation point of view at the start, which was I would look, this was my interpretation rightly or wrongly, and probably say that as wrongly now, is my view was if I don't get a really high mark on this course, that's going to be ... People are going to perceive me as not being as good professionally as I would if I didn't.

Interviewer: I know exactly what you're saying, and I think that it is absolutely right, and it is an ego thing. I think it's potentially quite damaging if it goes too far and becomes too competitive. And I think, also, the reality of the classification of degree is an academic thing, and what it really shows is that you can write and you can present, and deliver more academically. It doesn't demonstrate, and I think this is where when you said about there's the apprenticeships, and then there's the degree. I think it's also it puts a pressure on people because it's not ... Certainly what's come back to me is it's not what employers are looking for, and it's not ... They're looking for the changes in their people and that is not as a result of the classification of degree. But degrees are classified so, therefore, there will be that competition.

Interviewer: I mean, do you think that ... not that it's going to change in our lifetimes, but do you think in order to get the most out of this type of program, would it be better if there was or wasn't the classification?

LER02: Do you know what, I think in terms of whilst you were saying that I was just relating it back to the question from earlier around the answer I gave around the CMI, and the apprenticeship standard. Essentially, we kind of almost ... If we forget the fact that there's a classification, we have a degree apprenticeship that has a specification that says, "This is the standard of an effective manager." That doesn't have a classification. That is just the standard. You either meet that standard or you don't in terms of your skills, your knowledge, and your behaviors. I think the way I actually think about it, it's slightly changed. Well, actually, it hasn't slightly changed. It's always been the case ,is my primary thought is on achieving the standard, not achieving the degree classification.

LER02: This might seem as if contradicts what I said before. It doesn't. I just didn't mention this before. The way in which I think about the way UCQ has approached the degree, is for it to be completely embedded within that standard. So if you achieve the degree, you achieve the standard that is the standard of an effective, high-performing manager. The reason why I sort of said about the expectations in terms of the degree side of things, it wasn't necessarily a kind of "Ooh, I want to get a first." It was kind of, I don't want to get anything less than the highest achievable. Do you know what I mean? I'm trying to remove the classification from it because, when I'm thinking about it ...

LER02: I'm saying I've got 62%, for example, rather than, "Boom! I've got in 2-1 for that." Now, I don't know if that terminology changes for

traditional undergraduates. Do they say, "Oh, okay. I've got a 2:1 for that assignment"? Or my year one results on my transcript shows that I've got it a 2-1 for year one.

Interviewer: In my experience, yes. They do and they spend a lot of time talking about that, and they use those classifications throughout the program from the very, very start. I'm not saying that I think that's right or that I think it's helpful, but yes, they do tend to talk in those terms.

LER02: Interesting because I don't know if you've spotted this; I would say we rarely do. Even in terms of the marking and the feedback, it's based on percentages. It's not kind of, "This is the 2-1 or this is 2-2, or this is a first." When I'm talking, and when I'm sort of discussing stuff, and saying, "What marks you got?" It's based on the percentage level and the classification. It might just be a different approach.

Interviewer: Let me just ask you about the deliverers on the course. I mean, do you of think the delivery staff as being academics or tutors, or facilitators?

LER02: I don't think of them as being what I would perceive, previous before participating in this program, I don't think they are the same or I don't view them as the same as a doctor, a professor, or a lecturer. I think that's because the approach is different. I mentioned earlier about that, kind of a lot closer to the students.

Interviewer: Yes.

LER02: Kind of groups are smaller. There's a lot more opportunity for discussion and debate within sessions, rather than a hundred people in a lecture theatre. You can't really have a discussion and the debate in the same way. No. Like I say, my experience of the

alternative, and the traditional academics is relatively limited. I wouldn't consider our delivery staff in that way. They might not like to hear that because they might consider themselves as the same. I don't mean that as a derogatory, and I'm not saying that they are any lesser than the traditional academic. I just think that it's a different approach.

Interviewer: No. I'll ask a different question. In terms of the sort of work relevance, are you satisfied that the course is directly relevant to your work?

LER02: I don't think there's a single thing that hasn't been relevant. I firmly believe that.

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

LER02: Bar the academic skills at the beginning, but that's just essential for being able to complete the assignments, and do the work, so that's relevant to the degree. But in terms of the actual main modules, I can't think of a single thing that hasn't been relevant.

Interviewer: Could I just ask on a very different one, going back and just considering barriers and so on. Have you given any thought to whether the degree apprenticeships further social mobility?

LER02: I think in the way that they provide an opportunity for people who wouldn't ordinarily get the opportunity to do a degree, then they definitely do. What I mean is that, even if it's people's second degree, because they may have done a degree in a different subject, it may be in work. They may be working for a good number of years and they would not normally, I would say, have the opportunity to do another degree, and especially do a degree that is directly related to the job that they're doing. I think in that it's opened up the opportunity for people who wouldn't ordinarily,

or maybe people who didn't do a degree. For example, I mean, I'm quite a good example. I don't know if this is classified as social mobility, but the traditional university route at that time in my life as an 18, 19-year old wasn't right for me.

LER02: I would probably be classed as someone who wouldn't choose the traditional university route, but I'm very much bought into the new degree apprenticeship route.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. In terms of there's a lot of talk, and there's a lot of press around the 20% off the job element. I'm just wondering whether for you as a learner on the program you've seen that as a barrier in any way?

LER02: Personally, no. I think the 20% off the job thing has been talked about a lot within the sector, and I think it's a little bit of a red herring in terms of the way it's been talked about. I think, obviously, from a compliance point of view, we need to evidence a plan of how we are covering 20% off the job for apprenticeships.

LER02: I think degree apprenticeships have had this applied to them as a consequence of it being applied to lower level apprenticeships. And the reason why it's being applied to lower level apprenticeships is because people who are on apprenticeships are not really learning anything because they didn't have the time to come off the job to learn the skills, to learn the theory behind doing a particular task. And I think as a consequence of degree apprenticeships being having to follow the same rules as every other apprenticeship right down to level two, which is your kind of lowest level apprenticeship, the rules have been applied to the degree level apprenticeships. I think the amount of work that you have to put into doing a degree covers your 20% off the job anyway.

LER02: Not necessarily in work time, which the auditors would say, "You're not allowed to count," but personally it's not an issue for me, and I think a lot has been overplayed in terms of its issue. Maybe not at the lower level, but I don't have experience of the delivery of the lower level apprenticeships under the new rules, but definitely at degree level apprenticeships, I think it's something which almost takes care of itself.

Interviewer: Do you think that the idea of the degree apprenticeship being assessed rather than examined, does that influence your perception of the program? I mean, do you prefer it to be assessed rather than examined or would you prefer to have exams? What are your thoughts on that?

LER02: I'm going back on sort of early education experiences and things. I didn't like exams. I wasn't bad at exams. I just didn't like them. I think to the way that I learned, the way that I demonstrate that I have and possess that knowledge is not best demonstrated through formalized, rigid exams. I think the bits that I like, the assessments, are kind of ... I'd quite like to see different types of assessments as well, such as ones like on the doctorate in terms of the Viva, and things like that, and being assessed through more discussions, and Q&As, and exploring certain ideas, and showing that you have those skills. I think to its lesser extent through presentations we've demonstrated that with Q&A after the presentations.

LER02: I think I definitely prefer those methods, and the assignments where you are a bit freer to express yourself in the way that you feel is best representative of the way that you can demonstrate the skills and knowledge. Rather than through a formal, strict, rigid ,regimental examination where everybody has to give the same answers to the same questions in order to pass.

Interviewer: It potentially makes life more difficult for the delivery staff in terms of those contextualized assignments, but what I'm hearing is, though, it's better for the learner and it's better for the employer, perhaps, as well. In terms of UCQ as a provider, do you see them having strong industrial links or not? I mean with employers.

LER02: I mean, at the moment no. I think UCQ does have links within industry, tutors have business experience, which is important. It's not exploited that to anywhere near the extent it could with regard to the chartered management degree apprenticeship.

Interviewer: Do you think UCQ understand employer and employees?

LER02: I think so. Yes. I would say yes. I think that is one thing that not just on the degree apprenticeships, on all programs is to make sure that we understand what they're looking to get, what they're looking to change, what they're looking to achieve, and fit what we do in line with that. I think a lot of the work that we do with employers on anything we deliver, including the degree apprenticeships, is to try and put ourselves in their shoes.

Interviewer: Okay. Thanks. I've got one.

LER02: Or at least, that's the intention.

Interviewer: Yes. I've got one final area of questioning, which is related to this idea of being placed based. It's exploring - if you look at universities, the civic universities and then, also, polytechnics as they were, they were considered to be both of a place and for a place. What I mean by that is they were both ... Say, for example, Newcastle Polytechnic was based in Newcastle, very much also for the benefit of Newcastle. So it was looking to have an impact on the businesses in the surrounding Newcastle areas. It was very much focused on supporting local employers, and

employees to go to work with those employers. Similarly, Newcastle University, as an example, as a civic university - very high on its agenda was the need to support the social and civic side of Newcastle.

Interviewer: So these institutions, they're established in particular areas or cities, and they support those cities. So they're both of the place and they're for the place. What I'm curious to explore, really, is with the degree apprenticeships it seems that potentially there is a difference now because you've now got national employers who may wish to engage with a national provider. Now, historically, the universities they are not usually national providers. They're torn between their heritage, which is of a place and for a place. And now the degree apprenticeship provision, which if an employer is looking for a national provider, either the universities have to change and become national providers or new and alternative providers, such as UCQ, will come in and deliver nationally. I'm just wondering if you have any views on that?

LER02: Yeah. I would also just add, just to the fact that the universities, the geographic ones, kind of the vast majority of the universities, have the title of where they in their name. They are the city. It's almost kind of, it's not the fact they are there for the city, they actually are the city, physically. A lot of universities, especially the older ones, they're landmarks within the cities. The cities wouldn't be the cities without the universities and without the buildings. It wouldn't be the same city, and I think that idea of the geographical location and the university in that location, I think it's a lot more deep rooted than people imagine. I think from a societal point of view is, if you took away Newcastle University from Newcastle, Newcastle would look completely different.

LER02: It would be a different city in terms of the people who are there, in terms of possibly the type of industry that is in and around the city, because a lot of the geographic ones do have ... They have specialisms based on where they are. I think part of the reason why I personally think ... I mean, this is, again, opinion, is why the universities, the traditional geographic ones, I don't think they will be able to become the national providers because they're so deep rooted in their locations.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you with UCQ as your provider? I mean, does it matter to you where UCQ are based? I don't mean in terms of the session delivery, but I mean in terms of head office or campus.

LER02: I mean, that question for me is slightly different because I can't truly answer that question by removing the fact that I am a student of and, also, work for UCQ, because they are two very different things. The location of UCQ is actually very important to me as a person because if I wanted to work for UCQ, and UCQ was based in Manchester, I would have to move to Manchester or at least have a long commute every day. I'm kind of sort of swerve a direct answer on that one because I can't personally remove those two things.

Interviewer: In terms of the delivery, so if the delivery comes to you at your employment, and is then available online, if UCQ's administrative office or campus was in another location, do you think it would have an impact? I don't mean that you were to move. I mean, that you were still ... that your employment and location were unaffected. In terms of the delivery, do you think it has any real impact?

LER02: You know what? My view on that question has actually changed and has changed recently. And I think it's something that needs

to be discussed a little bit, is previously my view was it doesn't matter one bit whether the delivery location has a building, a kind of campus, classrooms, that sort of thing because we can send our delivery staff to the students. I think we'll get to a situation where ,let's say you increase student numbers, there will be a percentage of those students who do not want the delivery in the workplace. Who want to come out of the workplace to feel as if they are undertaking a degree that they perceive is what a degree is. And by going to an institution, and walking along corridors, and encountering other students, and academic staff, and things like that, and feel a bit more a part of a community of people.

LER02:   I'm not saying an academic community. I'm not saying a student community because that's a very different thing, and I'm not saying I think we need a physical, traditional university campus. I'm not. I think having a physical location is important and having a physical location that students can go to and use I think is more important than I previously thought it was.

Interviewer: On that point, just picking up on that, do you think that in terms of the higher education itself, how important is the campus in that? I mean, there are suggestions in the literature that ,almost as if by osmosis when students are in an academic campus, they pick up knowledge. They absorb knowledge, whereas, with the degree apprenticeships it's so different because if the learning is taking place in the companies, and other locations other than a traditional campus. Do you see within the companies is that a suitable place for higher education in your opinion?

LER02:   This is exactly the kind of thought process that I've been having recently. And the answer to that question is I think the jury is out. I don't think we can categorically say that we can deliver degree-level education to the same level of quality and outputs, and

outcomes by going and delivering in a meeting room or boardroom at the employer site. I think the fact that that room that we're delivering at one of our client sites is a room that the students, the employees, have also had ... They may have had a meeting in that room the day before. There's more to the location than just absorbing the knowledge and working towards a degree. They'll see that as something else, and maybe because of that they're not getting everything out of the sessions that they could.

LER02: There's another side of it, not just about the student, but in terms of the delivery staff. Just the person who is there delivering the session or facilitating the session are they doing it in the same way as they would if it was in the institution itself? That's a question. I don't have an answer to that. These are just sort of thoughts that I've been thinking about that I think are worth discussing.

Interviewer: I think they're insightful thoughts, and very much related to this difference between a traditional degree and a degree apprenticeship. Taking it a step further, and this is my final question, if we have places of employment, as we do, where higher education is now taking place, and I'm not asking about companies such as Dyson potentially applying for degree-awarding powers, and to become a university in their own right. But I'm just interested in whether you have any thoughts about if employers are - Santander, as an example. If they are becoming a place of higher education, do you see employers as potentially becoming a part of the university, almost a part of a university campus?

LER02: Or the university or an institution kind of having a physical location on the site or grounds of an employer.

Interviewer: Do you see the employer? Yes, but do you see the employer as potentially being a suitable place for higher education?

LER02: I think it would have to. My view and, again, to just follow on from my last point is in its current form, just using the rules that are available for the normal business day-to-day stuff. I think in order to make it properly work, I think there will need to be thoughts given to those particular locations, and having places that are just for the delivery of education that are separate from the normal day-to-day rooms. In terms of [crosstalk 01:19:47]-

Interviewer: With those rooms, do you think it is sort of a ... because there's quite a strong body of literature that says that only the actual physical university campus is a suitable place for a higher education. And it seems that in particular with work-based learning, but in particular with the degree apprenticeships, that there's potentially quite a radical change because the higher education is starting to take place within companies. So it's almost, there's a potential, if you take that to the extreme, that in the future companies become the place of higher education learning.

LER02: Yeah. I think just to come back to my point before in terms of just the thought that I had about, it's more I don't know if there's an impact. We need to be aware or we need to kind of at least think about the fact that there may be an inequality of outcome based on the delivery location. I know that's something the Open University were keen on us to explore and make sure that our different learning centres have the same kind of outcomes for learners. But obviously in that is the fact that we're not delivering purely at our different locations with classrooms in. We're delivering onsite with the employer.

LER02: We need to make sure that the equality and the outcomes are the same, regardless of where we're delivering. And the point I'm raising is, at the minute because we're delivering on the employer's site, and it's unusual for degree-level programs to be delivered on the employer site - at the minute then it may not be conducive to learning, to teaching, to delivery. In the future, I can definitely see a situation where the employers have the delivery is still an onsite. You know, maybe they've got their own academies in place. Dyson is a really good example of that, but I know for years like Rolls Royce, and I know locally Caterpillar, they've got specific areas within the factory that are for training. Like a different type of training, but they are for training.

LER02: They're for learning and doing specific things. I mean, Siemens down the road they have got stimulated areas. To a certain extent, those activities do take place, and they have for a long time, but I suppose the difference is it's not necessarily with the HE.

Interviewer: Do you think that the opening up of a virtual campus is something that would support students in their employment?

LER02: From my point of view, absolutely. I mean, I think taking away the idea of geography, I think is definitely, definitely, definitely possible and doable, but not in the way in which that we may have been doing it so far. I.e. it doesn't matter where we are because we come to you. If we reframe that and kind of change the wording a bit to, "It doesn't matter where we are because it's all virtual." That's the way that everything is going. That's the way that the world will be in the future. When was the last time you physically went into a bank? When was the last time you had to go pay something in at the bank? I had to because I got a refund from British Gas, but it's those sort of things that we now take for granted such as online banking.

LER02:   Online degrees, just online anything. Online courses and programs, I mean, we do it anyway in terms of all our safeguarding and quality and diversity. You don't have to get people in to deliver those courses because they exist and they're online.

Interviewer: Thank you for that. I mean, I've asked you everything that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you think I should have asked or is there anything that you would like to add?

LER02:   I think one thing that would be worth exploring, I don't know whether you've asked this when you've been speaking to employers, is are they happy about paying the levy?

Interviewer: Yeah. It is a question that I do ask the employers. Yeah. Different responses; it depends, really, what they're getting out of it, and I suppose, also, what their perceptions of apprenticeships are. I'm not sure that the half a percent is for many employers a huge big deal. It is for some, and some are indicating that they have fewer apprentices on the program because they are having to pay the levy. Others have more apprentices on program because they're paying the levy. I don't particularly get ... Certainly reading literature, I don't get the impression that it is as negatively perceived as it wa at the start. The take up seems to be increasing amongst the sector organizations who are questioning their members, the interest it seems to be more positive now than it was.

LER02:   Yeah. It was just an interesting thing, which you often forget about the fact that, yes, they haven't got a choice, but pay in it, but it would be interesting to hear how their opinions on it actually are. You know, the actual paying the tax. I mean, one thing I would add, and I don't know, it kind of just sort of summarizes my

thoughts from earlier, which is I think there is a case, this is purely experiential rather than kind of any sort of reading or anything like that, there is a case for separating degree apprenticeships from other apprenticeships in terms of the rules and the regulations around them because I think they are very different things because of the degree element. And I think there is a difficulty there of operating within two different sort of regulatory frameworks that have different things that they'd want you to do, and often those things are in opposition to each other.

LER02:   I think degree apprenticeships and work-based degrees funded through the levy, I think great. I think they give an opportunity to organizations and people who wouldn't ordinarily have that opportunity. But I think this is purely from a provider point of view, that delivering the degree apprenticeships is made more difficult because you have to comply with the rules of a lower level apprenticeship as well as the rules of delivering a degree.

Interviewer: So you think potentially the policy and paperwork requirements are a barrier?

LER02:   Yeah. I do. I think you can make them work. There are ways to make it work by doing things in particular ways, which I think we've been able to doo. But I think a lot of it could be if it was improved, and some things that were out of step with the delivery of degrees that are in apprenticeships, if they were changed, and there were concessions made for degree-level apprenticeships, I think it would make it a lot easier to make the delivery successful.

Interviewer: Thank you for that.

8.3.2.3 LER03

Learner responses from notes

Interviewer: In terms of this sort of recent announcement for non-levy payers, or for people with a levy account who go over their balance. This announcement, well certainly for the small employers, of a reduction from the 10% co-investment to 5%; as an employee, do you think that that's going to have any impact? Do you think it would have made any difference to UCQ investing in your program if they were paying 5% rather than 10%?

LER03:   It doesn't affect me.

Interviewer: Do you think there should be an employer co-investment, or do you think it should be removed altogether?

LER03:   I do. The employer needs to contribute, but they also contribute time. They pay us I mean.

Interviewer: As a learner on the program, have you seen the apprenticeship levy making a difference?

LER03:   If it is funding my study, then yes.

Interviewer: Do you think the levy will continue? Do you think it'll be here to stay or do you think it's going to be a short-term thing?

LER03:   I don't know.

Interviewer: Do you think it should be increased from a half a percent?

LER03:   I don't have an opinion on it. Apprenticeships are a good thing, so probably, yes.

Interviewer: There seems to be some negative press around the funding of the higher management, the degree apprenticeship such as the one that you're on. There is some negative press around that and I just wonder; do you think that the degree apprenticeship should be funded through the levy? Do you think they are a true apprenticeship?

LER03: Being on a degree apprenticeship I am biased. But I have seen the benefits to me and my employer, so they should remain.

Interviewer: Do you think the degree apprenticeship is very similar to a normal degree, if you like, a non-degree apprenticeship or do you think it is wildly different or widely different?

LER03: It is very different and that's a good thing

Interviewer: No. Thanks for that. I'm just wondering - in terms of just thinking about the Deming Plan-Do-Check-Act process, literature suggests that companies often undertake the planning and the doing, but don't often check and review what is happening. I'm just curious to know whether the levy has an impact on that and whether the new funding regime has any impact on either the planning of training, and/or the reviewing of it. In terms of the program that you're on, do you see any more planning and review process than on a non-fund program or is it much the same?

LER03: More. More paperwork too.

Interviewer: In terms of when your employer was presenting the course as an option; did they undertake a formal training needs analysis or was it less formal, or was it informal, and did you as an employee have any input in that process?

LER03:   We put forward a business case to our employer and [..] made the final decision.

Interviewer: I mean, the economic literature suggests that employers will always expect a financial return for any service that they provide or any service that they invest in. I'm just curious to know what your opinion is of that as an employee? Do you think it's realistic or possible to measure a financial return on investment? Do you think that your employer has given any real thought to a financial return on investment for your participation on the program?

LER03:   There should be a return for the employer.

Interviewer: Do you think that your employer has a measure of any sort of financial return on investment?

LER03:   No.

Interviewer: In terms of the apprenticeship levy itself, I'm asking what your personal opinion is, whether you perceive it as being a source of public finance or private finance?

LER03:   I don't know much about it. Private. It must be private, it's our money

Interviewer: Do you think it makes any difference whether it's perceived as being ... Would it make any difference to you if you perceived it as being a private fund rather than a public fund? What I mean is, in terms of who the likely beneficiaries are. There's literature that suggests that when there is public money that is paying for education, that both the public funder and the students being supported through the public fund, that both are looking to get a social or civic return. So I'm curious to know whether you've given any thought to - if you perceive it as a public fund, are you looking

for you personally to make a social or civic return as a result of you being on the program?

LER03:   It's not something I've thought about.

Interviewer: In terms of yourself on your learning journey, do you consider yourself to be a lifelong learner?

LER03:   You could say that.

Interviewer: Do you think that there have been barriers that have prevented you from participating in learning previously?

LER03:   Maybe questioning myself. My ability to do this type of programme.

Interviewer: Let me just ask you about the deliverers on the course. I mean, do you of think the delivery staff as being academics or tutors, or facilitators?

LER03:   Probably tutors and assessors.

Interviewer: In terms of the sort of work relevance, are you satisfied that the course is directly relevant to your work?

LER03:   Yes but it is also hard to learn about the wider subject.

Interviewer: Could I just ask on a very different one, going back and just considering barriers and so on. Have you given any thought to whether the degree apprenticeships further social mobility?

LER03:   Yes.

Interviewer: There is a lot of press around the 20% off the job element. I'm just wondering whether for you as a learner on the program you've seen that as a barrier in any way?

LER03:	[My employer] is getting better. When we started we were told [by our employer] that we'd need to attend in the evenings and there was no question that we would need write our assignments in our own time. [UCQ] had to remind [my employer] of the contract which states that [off the job] necessity.

Interviewer:	It potentially makes life more difficult for the delivery staff in terms of those contextualized assignments, but what I'm hearing is, though, it's better for the learner and it's better for the employer, perhaps, as well. In terms of UCQ as a provider, do you see them having strong industrial links or not? I mean with employers.

LER03:	It needs to be relevant to my job.

Interviewer:	Do you think UCQ understand employer and employees?

LER03:	Not enough. There is no flexibility with hand in dates to take account of work pressures.

Interviewer:	Does it matter to you with UCQ as your provider? I mean, does it matter to you where UCQ are based? I don't mean in terms of the session delivery, but I mean in terms of head office or campus.

LER03:	We started off at UCQ. Then we had sessions at work, in the evenings. It is better being back at UCQ.

Interviewer:	In terms of the delivery, so if the delivery comes to you at your employment, and is then available online, if UCQ's administrative office or campus was in another location, do you think it would have an impact? I don't mean that you were to move. I mean, that you were still ... that your employment and location were unaffected. In terms of the delivery, do you think it has any real impact?

LER03:   So long as the training takes place not too far from me. The assessor comes to me anyway.

Interviewer: Do you see the employer as potentially being a suitable place for higher education?

LER03:   No.

Interviewer: Do you think that the opening up of a virtual campus is something that would support students in their employment?

LER03:   Yes, but you need people too. It couldn't be all on-line.

8.3.2.4 LER04

Learner responses from notes

Interviewer: In terms of this sort of recent announcement for non-levy payers, or for people with a levy account who go over their balance. This announcement, well certainly for the small employers, of a reduction from the 10% co-investment to 5%; as an employee, do you think that that's going to have any impact? Do you think it would have made any difference to UCQ investing in your program if they were paying 5% rather than 10%?

LER04: I don't know about it, sorry.

Interviewer: Do you think there should be an employer co-investment, or do you think it should be removed altogether?

LER04: Yes, I think so.

Interviewer: As a learner on the program, have you seen the apprenticeship levy making a difference?

LER04: I don't know about that either.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on, there seems to be some negative press around the funding of the higher management, the degree apprenticeship such as the one that you're on. There is some negative press around that and I just wonder; do you think that the degree apprenticeship should be funded through the levy? Do you think they are a true apprenticeship?

LER04: We need apprenticeships. In [our company] all the carers go on an apprenticeship. But this gives an option for managers too and that's important.

Interviewer: Do you think the degree apprenticeship is very similar to a normal degree, if you like, a non-degree apprenticeship or do you think it is widely different?

LER04: Very different.

Interviewer: I terms of the Deming Plan-Do-Check-Act process, literature suggests that companies often undertake the planning and the doing, but don't often check and review what is happening. I'm just curious to know whether the levy has an impact on that and whether the new funding regime has any impact on either the planning of training, and/or the reviewing of it. In terms of the program that you're on, do you see any more planning and review process than on a non-fund program or is it much the same?

LER04: It might take a while to review.

Interviewer: In terms of when your employer was presenting the course as an option; did they undertake a formal training needs analysis or was it less formal, or was it informal, and did you as an employee have any input in that process?

LER04: No. I think it was [UCQ].

Interviewer: I mean, the economic literature suggests that employers will always expect a financial return for any service that they provide or any service that they invest in. I'm just curious to know what your opinion is of that as an employee? Do you think it's realistic or possible to measure a financial return on investment? Do you think that your employer has given any real thought to a financial return on investment for your participation on the program?

LER04: They should get some value from it.

Interviewer: Do you think that your employer has a measure of any sort of financial return on investment?

LER04: Not directly.

Interviewer: In terms of the apprenticeship levy itself, I'm asking what your personal opinion is, whether you perceive it as being a source of public finance or private finance?

LER04: I don't know about it so I can't answer. If it's a levy then it sounds public.

Interviewer: Do you think it makes any difference whether it's perceived as being ... Would it make any difference to you if you perceived it as being a private fund rather than a public fund? What I mean is, in terms of who the likely beneficiaries are. There's literature that suggests that when there is public money that is paying for education, that both the public funder and the students being supported through the public fund, that both are looking to get a social or civic return. So I'm curious to know whether you've given any thought to - if you perceive it as a public fund, are you looking for you personally to make a social or civic return as a result of you being on the program?

LER04: No.

Interviewer: In terms of yourself on your learning journey, do you consider yourself to be a lifelong learner?

LER04: An adult learner.

Interviewer: Do you think that there have been barriers that have prevented you from participating in learning previously?

LER04:   I don't think I'd have got in with qualifications. Plus, with work and
             the time involved and having a family.

Interviewer: Let me just ask you about the deliverers on the course. I mean,
             do you of think the delivery staff as being academics or tutors, or
             facilitators?

LER04:   Tutors definitely.

Interviewer: In terms of the sort of work relevance, are you satisfied that the
             course is directly relevant to your work?

LER04:   Not all of it.

Interviewer: Could I just ask on a very different one, going back and just
             considering barriers and so on. Have you given any thought to
             whether the degree apprenticeships further social mobility?

LER04:   Yes, it makes me more socially mobile.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. In terms of there's a lot of talk, and there's a lot
             of press around the 20% off the job element. I'm just wondering
             whether for you as a learner on the program you've seen that as
             a barrier in any way?

LER04:   It is a pain. It takes a lot of paperwork.

Interviewer: It potentially makes life more difficult for the delivery staff in terms
             of those contextualized assignments, but what I'm hearing is,
             though, it's better for the learner and it's better for the employer,
             perhaps, as well. In terms of UCQ as a provider, do you see them
             having strong industrial links or not? I mean with employers.

LER04:   They need to understand employers. I think they do, yes.

Interviewer: I've got one final area of questioning, which is related to this idea of being placed based. It's exploring - if you look at universities, the civic universities and then, also, polytechnics as they were, they were considered to be both of a place and for a place. What I mean by that is they were both ... Say, for example, Newcastle Polytechnic was based in Newcastle, very much also for the benefit of Newcastle. So it was looking to have an impact on the businesses in the surrounding Newcastle areas. It was very much focused on supporting local employers, and employees to go to work with those employers. Similarly, Newcastle University, as an example, as a civic university - very high on its agenda was the need to support the social and civic side of Newcastle.

Interviewer: So these institutions, they're established in particular areas or cities, and they support those cities. So they're both of the place and they're for the place. What I'm curious to explore, really, is with the degree apprenticeships it seems that potentially there is a difference now because you've now got national employers who may wish to engage with a national provider. Now, historically, the universities they are not usually national providers. They're torn between their heritage, which is of a place and for a place. And now the degree apprenticeship provision, which if an employer is looking for a national provider, either the universities have to change and become national providers or new and alternative providers, such as UCQ, will come in and deliver nationally. I'm just wondering if you have any views on that?

LER04: It needs to be relevant to [my sector] and it needs to be close to work.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you with UCQ as your provider? I mean, does it matter to you where UCQ are based? I don't mean in terms of the session delivery, but I mean in terms of head office or campus.

LER04:   No, other than what I just said.

Interviewer: Do you think that the opening up of a virtual campus is something
              that would support students in their employment?

LER04:   I prefer the face to face contact.

8.3.2.5 LER05

Learner responses from notes

Interviewer: In terms of this sort of recent announcement for non-levy payers, or for people with a levy account who go over their balance. This announcement, well certainly for the small employers, of a reduction from the 10% co-investment to 5%; as an employee, do you think that that's going to have any impact? Do you think it would have made any difference to UCQ investing in your program if they were paying 5% rather than 10%?

LER05: I do believe that the 10% levy does make a difference

Interviewer: Do you think there should be an employer co-investment, or do you think it should be removed altogether?

LER05: I think it should remain.

Interviewer: As a learner on the program, have you seen the apprenticeship levy making a difference?

LER05: Not so much for me.

Interviewer: Do you think the levy will continue? Do you think it'll be here to stay or do you think it's going to be a short-term thing?

LER05: It depends on what happens with the government. There will always be apprentices though.

Interviewer: Do you think it should be increased from a half a percent?

LER05: I don't know.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on, there seems to be some negative press around the funding of the higher management, the degree

apprenticeship such as the one that you're on. There is some negative press around that and I just wonder; do you think that the degree apprenticeship should be funded through the levy? Do you think they are a true apprenticeship?

LER05: I am supportive of degree apprenticeships. It has been the right solution for me.

Interviewer: Do you think the degree apprenticeship is very similar to a normal degree, if you like, a non-degree apprenticeship or do you think it is wildly different or widely different?

LER05: Very different. I went to [a university] recently and I thought "Nah, this isn't for me. It was all kids"

Interviewer: No. Thanks for that. I'm just wondering - in terms of just thinking about the Deming Plan-Do-Check-Act process, literature suggests that companies often undertake the planning and the doing, but don't often check and review what is happening. I'm just curious to know whether the levy has an impact on that and whether the new funding regime has any impact on either the planning of training, and/or the reviewing of it. In terms of the program that you're on, do you see any more planning and review process than on a non-fund program or is it much the same?

LER05: The training is not planned and reviewed but a module programme met our requirements

Interviewer: In terms of when your employer was presenting the course as an option; did they undertake a formal training needs analysis or was it less formal, or was it informal, and did you as an employee have any input in that process?

LER05: We do not undertake formal needs mapping. We do not use a TNA model however we are aware of what is needed. The training needs analysis is undertaken by employer guided by the provider.

Interviewer: The economic literature suggests that employers will always expect a financial return for any service that they provide or any service that they invest in. I'm just curious to know what your opinion is of that as an employee? Do you think it's realistic or possible to measure a financial return on investment? Do you think that your employer has given any real thought to a financial return on investment for your participation on the program?

LER05: Ideally we are looking for an instant economic return however this could be measured by time based additional/improved skills.

Interviewer: Do you think that your employer has a measure of any sort of financial return on investment?

LER05: The impact of training is only evaluated as part of our current market awareness. We are always looking for a return on investment in some form no matter where the source comes from

Interviewer: In terms of the apprenticeship levy itself, I'm asking what your personal opinion is, whether you perceive it as being a source of public finance or private finance?

LER05: It's private…no wait…it's a levy. Does that make it public?

Interviewer: Do you think it makes any difference whether it's perceived as being ... Would it make any difference to you if you perceived it as being a private fund rather than a public fund? What I mean is, in terms of who the likely beneficiaries are. There's literature that suggests that when there is public money that is paying for

education, that both the public funder and the students being supported through the public fund, that both are looking to get a social or civic return. So I'm curious to know whether you've given any thought to - if you perceive it as a public fund, are you looking for you personally to make a social or civic return as a result of you being on the program?

LER05:   Yes, I think it does. I mean I still think of it as my company investing in my development.

Interviewer: In terms of yourself on your learning journey, do you consider yourself to be a lifelong learner?

LER05:   Not formal training but I have always been learning.

Interviewer: Do you think that there have been barriers that have prevented you from participating in learning previously?

LER05:   Cost. I would not have asked my family to pay. Qualifications, I went to College not university. I don't know what the entry was but if it was A Levels then I didn't have them.   The degree apprenticeship provided the only route to overcoming established barriers

Interviewer: Let me just ask you about the deliverers on the course. I mean, do you of think the delivery staff as being academics or tutors, or facilitators?

LER05:   Not too academic I don't think. [The assessor] has really helped me to understand what evidence I need for the modules. I believe that the delivery staff consider themselves to be professional lecturers which in my opinion is what they are

Interviewer: In terms of the sort of work relevance, are you satisfied that the course is directly relevant to your work?

LER05:	I have applied it to my work. The programme delivers relevant communication, motivation and problem solving skills in a manner which can be implemented, monitored and supports.

Interviewer:	Could I just ask on a very different one, going back and just considering barriers and so on. Have you given any thought to whether the degree apprenticeships further social mobility?

LER05:	Social mobility was not a factor however we are fully aware of the positive social and financial effects education can have on the country as a whole. I have not applied to any University before.

Interviewer:	Thanks for that. In terms of there's a lot of talk, and there's a lot of press around the 20% off the job element. I'm just wondering whether for you as a learner on the program you've seen that as a barrier in any way?

LER05:	The off-the-job requirements are not a problem

Interviewer:	It potentially makes life more difficult for the delivery staff in terms of those contextualized assignments, but what I'm hearing is, though, it's better for the learner and it's better for the employer, perhaps, as well. In terms of UCQ as a provider, do you see them having strong industrial links or not? I mean with employers.

LER05:	They need the anecdotal, so yes, to make it sticky they do need to know about real business. I've been able to relate it to [my industry]. So I'd say yes it is. In my opinion all staff meet the required standard for their allocated tasks

Interviewer:	Do you think UCQ understand employer and employees?

LER05:	The providers link to industry can be through learner feedback and this is an important factor.

Interviewer: I've got one final area of questioning, which is related to this idea of being placed based. It's exploring - if you look at universities, the civic universities and then, also, polytechnics as they were, they were considered to be both of a place and for a place. What I mean by that is they were both ... Say, for example, Newcastle Polytechnic was based in Newcastle, very much also for the benefit of Newcastle. So it was looking to have an impact on the businesses in the surrounding Newcastle areas. It was very much focused on supporting local employers, and employees to go to work with those employers. Similarly, Newcastle University, as an example, as a civic university - very high on its agenda was the need to support the social and civic side of Newcastle.

Interviewer: So these institutions, they're established in particular areas or cities, and they support those cities. So they're both of the place and they're for the place. What I'm curious to explore, really, is with the degree apprenticeships it seems that potentially there is a difference now because you've now got national employers who may wish to engage with a national provider. Now, historically, the universities they are not usually national providers. They're torn between their heritage, which is of a place and for a place. And now the degree apprenticeship provision, which if an employer is looking for a national provider, either the universities have to change and become national providers or new and alternative providers, such as UCQ, will come in and deliver nationally. I'm just wondering if you have any views on that?

LER05: My motivations for undertaking the programme were that of a time and location based nature due to prior working commitments.

Interviewer: In terms of the delivery, so if the delivery comes to you at your employment, and is then available online, if UCQ's administrative office or campus was in another location, do you think it would

have an impact? I don't mean that you were to move. I mean, that you were still ... that your employment and location were unaffected. In terms of the delivery, do you think it has any real impact?

LER05:   We needed a top level supplier than can provide the service locally. Quality and added value was required not just being from a place.

Interviewer: Do you see the employer? Yes, but do you see the employer as potentially being a suitable place for higher education?

LER05:   Perhaps. I haven't thought about that.

Interviewer: Do you think that the opening up of a virtual campus is something that would support students in their employment?

LER05:   Yes, but you need the staff back up. The current sessions are good. I wouldn't want everything to be online but then again I learn a lot from Youtube and I do that at night.

8.3.2.6 LER06

Learner responses from notes

Interviewer: In terms of this sort of recent announcement for non-levy payers, or for people with a levy account who go over their balance. This announcement, well certainly for the small employers, of a reduction from the 10% co-investment to 5%; as an employee, do you think that that's going to have any impact? Do you think it would have made any difference to UCQ investing in your program if they were paying 5% rather than 10%?

LER06: I mean it should make a difference.

Interviewer: Do you think there should be an employer co-investment, or do you think it should be removed altogether?

LER06: I like that my employer is contributing towards my program. I'm not bothered by how much their contribution is.

Interviewer: As a learner on the program, have you seen the apprenticeship levy making a difference?

LER06: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think the levy will continue? Do you think it'll be here to stay or do you think it's going to be a short-term thing?

LER06: I hope so. I want other people to be able to benefit from this programme.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on, there seems to be some negative press around the funding of the higher management, the degree apprenticeship such as the one that you're on. There is some negative press around that and I just wonder; do you think that

the degree apprenticeship should be funded through the levy? Do you think they are a true apprenticeship?

LER06: As I said, I think other people should be able to go on this programme.

Interviewer: Do you think the degree apprenticeship is very similar to a normal degree, if you like, a non-degree apprenticeship or do you think it is wildly different or widely different?

LER06: I think it is very different. It is right for me.

Interviewer: In terms of just thinking about the Deming Plan-Do-Check-Act process, literature suggests that companies often undertake the planning and the doing, but don't often check and review what is happening. I'm just curious to know whether the levy has an impact on that and whether the new funding regime has any impact on either the planning of training, and/or the reviewing of it. In terms of the program that you're on, do you see any more planning and review process than on a non-fund program or is it much the same?

LER06: There are a lot of reviews and a lot of reflection. I don't think it needs any more.

Interviewer: In terms of when your employer was presenting the course as an option; did they undertake a formal training needs analysis or was it less formal, or was it informal, and did you as an employee have any input in that process?

LER06: There was some work but not a formal analysis I don't think.

Interviewer: I mean, the economic literature suggests that employers will always expect a financial return for any service that they provide or any service that they invest in. I'm just curious to know what

your opinion is of that as an employee? Do you think it's realistic or possible to measure a financial return on investment? Do you think that your employer has given any real thought to a financial return on investment for your participation on the program?

LER06:   There should be a return for [my employer] I don't know how you would measure it.

Interviewer: Do you think that your employer has a measure of any sort of financial return on investment?

LER06:   Not really.

Interviewer: In terms of the apprenticeship levy itself, I'm asking what your personal opinion is, whether you perceive it as being a source of public finance or private finance?

LER06:   Public.

Interviewer: Do you think it makes any difference whether it's perceived as being ... Would it make any difference to you if you perceived it as being a private fund rather than a public fund? What I mean is, in terms of who the likely beneficiaries are. There's literature that suggests that when there is public money that is paying for education, that both the public funder and the students being supported through the public fund, that both are looking to get a social or civic return. So I'm curious to know whether you've given any thought to - if you perceive it as a public fund, are you looking for you personally to make a social or civic return as a result of you being on the program?

LER06:   I can see that it could.

Interviewer: In terms of yourself on your learning journey, do you consider yourself to be a lifelong learner?

LER06: Not in a formal way.

Interviewer: Do you think that there have been barriers that have prevented you from participating in learning previously?

LER06: I never liked exams…I had a bad experience at [college] where I just blanked. I mean I did pass, but I prefer the assignments on this course. I always put my family first which is why I waited so long to start the course. Because I went to college I might not have got into a university back then.

Interviewer: Let me just ask you about the deliverers on the course. I mean, do you of think the delivery staff as being academics or tutors, or facilitators?

LER06: [My WBL assessor] doesn't just tell me what I need, she] will work with me to gather the evidence. I feel like she want to help me.

Interviewer: In terms of the sort of work relevance, are you satisfied that the course is directly relevant to your work?

LER06: It has assignments that I can relate to my work, but I wouldn't say that the assignments are actually based upon or around my work.

Interviewer: In terms of your motivation and ego. Do you think it is a positive thing?

LER06: I do feel a strong sense of competition. If I get [a lower grade than my colleagues], it will reflect badly on me.

Interviewer: Could I just ask on a very different one, going back and just considering barriers and so on. Have you given any thought to whether the degree apprenticeships further social mobility?

LER06: It provides a different option.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. In terms of there's a lot of talk, and there's a lot of press around the 20% off the job element. I'm just wondering whether for you as a learner on the program you've seen that as a barrier in any way?

LER06: [My employer] has been okay for the most part but I couldn't do all the work in the office, so having said that, I do actually work on weekends too.

Interviewer: It potentially makes life more difficult for the delivery staff in terms of those contextualized assignments, but what I'm hearing is, though, it's better for the learner and it's better for the employer, perhaps, as well. In terms of UCQ as a provider, do you see them having strong industrial links or not? I mean with employers.

LER06: It's not what I would think of as being fully contextualized. There's not enough working together either. Most of the lecturers relate back to their business experiences, which helps give context.

Interviewer: Do you think UCQ understand employer and employees?

LER06: I think so.

Interviewer: I've got one final area of questioning, which is related to this idea of being placed based. It's exploring - if you look at universities, the civic universities and then, also, polytechnics as they were, they were considered to be both of a place and for a place. What I mean by that is they were both ... Say, for example, Newcastle Polytechnic was based in Newcastle, very much also for the benefit of Newcastle. So it was looking to have an impact on the businesses in the surrounding Newcastle areas. It was very much focused on supporting local employers, and employees to go to work with those employers. Similarly, Newcastle University, as an

example, as a civic university - very high on its agenda was the need to support the social and civic side of Newcastle.

Interviewer: So these institutions, they're established in particular areas or cities, and they support those cities. So they're both of the place and they're for the place. What I'm curious to explore, really, is with the degree apprenticeships it seems that potentially there is a difference now because you've now got national employers who may wish to engage with a national provider. Now, historically, the universities they are not usually national providers. They're torn between their heritage, which is of a place and for a place. And now the degree apprenticeship provision, which if an employer is looking for a national provider, either the universities have to change and become national providers or new and alternative providers, such as UCQ, will come in and deliver nationally. I'm just wondering if you have any views on that?

LER06: No.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you with UCQ as your provider? I mean, does it matter to you where UCQ are based? I don't mean in terms of the session delivery, but I mean in terms of head office or campus.

LER06: It matters where the sessions take place, yes.

Interviewer: Do you see the employer? Yes, but do you see the employer as potentially being a suitable place for higher education?

LER06: I think so, yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that the opening up of a virtual campus is something that would support students in their employment?

LER06: I think so, but I like the one to one sessions as well.

8.3.3 Employer interview transcripts

8.3.3.1 EMP01

Interviewer: In terms of the Apprenticeship Levy, I'm just wondering how much of an effect there is in terms of the co-investment. So what I mean by that is for [company name] as an employer, what do you think about the kind of ... I know it's 10% at the moment, the co-investment, and it's likely to drop to 5%. Do you think that an employer co-investment is a positive thing or a negative thing?

EMP01:   I think it's a positive thing because it brings about commitment, both from the employer and the employees. I think that it's difficult though, it's a difficult thing, because traditionally employers haven't paid for those lower-level programs, and therefore getting employers to understand the value of co-investing can be problematic. As you progress up the levels, personally I think a co-investment of 10% and 5% in the future is very positive, because it's allowing employees to access courses and training and apprenticeships and higher education that they may not have been able to access before.

EMP01:   And it's easier to ... I'm going to use the word convince the employer on the return of investment, because it is something, had they been having to train someone on a professional program, the contribution is a lot less than they would be paying if they went and did a bespoke training program at that level.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Do you think that the difference between 5% and 10% ... I mean, can you see that making much of a difference to [company name], as an employer, making a decision on whether to invest or not?

EMP01: Personally I don't think it will. I think once ourselves and other employers realize that you do have to pay a contribution, it may encourage employers who did not want to pay 10% to actually invest. But [our company] are very much about lifelong learning and continuing professional development, and the 10% contribution, as I say, is not an issue for ourselves. Therefore, 5% will not have that big an effect.

Interviewer: Do you think if the employer contribution was removed for smaller non-levy paying companies such as [company name], do you think that would make any difference to [company name] deciding whether or not to have members of staff on an apprenticeship?

EMP01: I'm not sure whether it would for [company name], because as I said, we're very much about that continuous professional development and training. I think it may be that for other organizations it would definitely. I don't know what the impact of commitment would be for other organizations, but for ourselves, removing it all together, because we're quite a small organization, it would not have a massive impact, but I strongly believe that it would on some organizations.

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

Interviewer: In terms of the Apprenticeship Levy itself, I'm just wondering what are your views on how effective the levy is? Do you see it as being something that is starting to get the apprentices on board? I'm just wondering what your thoughts are in terms of what difference it's making.

EMP01: I think there was a lot of resistance at the start from employers who were treating it as a corporation tax. I think the reasons for that were more around ... not necessarily around them seeing the value in the training, but more around being able to free people

up to do the training, because it's not necessarily an issue with the levy, but it's more about the 20% off-the-job training element. So more and more employers are starting to use it.

EMP01: I believe the government brought it in to try and increase the number of apprentices into the workplace, however, more and more employers controversially are using it to upskill existing staff. That includes the CMDA, it includes the executive leaders master's program as well. So figures, I believe, show that there's been a massive increase in management apprenticeships, and there's some confusion by the government as to why the numbers of level two apprentices have actually dropped. That is because the employers are not only paying the levy, but obviously the levy could be used to pay apprentice's wages, and therefore to bring in new people. It would be a double whammy really. There's also the costs associated with backfilling those people doing the programs in a number of sectors.

EMP01: So employers are coming around to the levy. The levy is here to stay in my view, but there are some employers who are not going to be able to spend their levy because either they've got a huge levy and it will get to a point where they've trained the staff they want to train. The only new people they would be training would be new staff, new entrants into the workplace, and there may not be those numbers coming through, and therefore they wouldn't be using their levy for that.

Interviewer: Do you think that it would make any difference to [company name], currently not a levy payer? Would it make any difference if small companies came in to scope, to pay the levy at the current rate of half a percent?

EMP01: If small companies came in, and therefore ... Well, what it would mean for [company name] is we would be able to offer our services to other employers. That's what it would, it would help that way because we work in that sector, and therefore they then may have those funds to be able to use our services.

EMP01: I suspect that they will ... in future, there's a couple of things that could happen. There's talk of the levy funds running out, which I'm not sure exactly how that would be. They go back to the government after two years. If smaller employers have to pay the levy, that would encourage them to actually use it, rather than having to pay a contribution because it was automatically coming out at HMRC, rather than them having to pay that 10% or 5% in the future.

EMP01: So those smaller employers, if they had to pay the levy, it would and should increase the numbers of apprentices because [crosstalk 00:08:17]-

Interviewer: From a ... Sorry.

EMP01: ... more likely to think that they would use it.

Interviewer: What I was really getting at is within [company name], from a payroll point of view, do you think there would be much, if any, resistance to paying half a percent into the levy pot?

EMP01: We wouldn't be able to have any resistance. If we for example, as an employer, were paying a half a percent and all employers had to pay that half a percent, [company name] would ensure, without a shadow of a doubt, that we would spend that half a percent on apprenticeship training.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: Was the employer involved in the recruitment process or did staff decide on the CMDA programme themselves, or was it a joint decision?

EMP01: Staff volunteered but it was a decision by both the CMDA participants and their manager. [Company name] is always keen on L&M programmes as a way of retaining and developing people, we just hadn't considered the CMDA.

Interviewer: You mentioned return on investment earlier, and it's a notoriously difficult thing to work out the return on investment in leadership and management. But I'm just wondering, is that something that has been done at [company name]? To your knowledge, has there been any either qualitative or quantitative research or return on investment calculations to work out-

EMP01: No.

Interviewer: ... whether the program is adding value?

EMP01: There hasn't been any scientific return on investment calculations or analysis. It's more around us noticing the changes in behaviors of managers undertaking the program, but we haven't done any specific return on investment or wanted to be able to measure that. It was more about individual's development, in order to do their job to the best of their ability.

Interviewer: In terms of the training itself, linked to what you've just been saying there, in terms of plan, do, check, and act or review, is the training that is taking place at [company name], is it being effectively planned and reviewed?

EMP01: Yeah. There's an opportunity to review training and ... Sorry, I've got some really bad feedback.

EMP01:   There's an opportunity to review sessions and determine whether they're effective. It's been very flexible actually, we've been very lucky to be able to choose when we want the sessions to be and so on.

Interviewer: Do you think-

EMP01:   It's not always the case when you go and do any training.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that the fact that the levy is now in and the funding for the degree apprenticeships, has that made any difference within [company name] in terms of the planning of training, the training of this type, the degree and then the executive master's, and the review process? Has it made a difference to that?

EMP01:   It's made a difference in that we've been able to access the training more readily than we would be able to access it in the past, and obviously there's been cost implications as well where we've managed to access training for a fraction of the cost than what it's normally. So it definitely has.

Interviewer: As an employer, I mean, have you witnessed [company name] undertaken a formal needs analysis or mapping for individuals, or is it more of an informal approach?

EMP01:   It's more of an informal. It's more that we have a clear line management and meeting structure where development is discussed, but it is more of an informal. So we will either identify a need, or an individual would identify a personal need, and that's when we would determine the most suitable form of training that was available at the right cost.

Interviewer: So the individual has some influence in the process?

EMP01: Absolutely, yes. There's no point in putting an individual on a three-year program or a two-year program unless they're committed to actually doing it, because you're just setting them up to fail.

Interviewer: Again, I mean-

EMP01: There is a large commitment.

Interviewer: Yes, it is a large commitment.

Interviewer: Again, I mean, do you think that's something that has changed as a result of the Apprenticeship Levy and the introduction of the degree apprenticeships?

EMP01: I think it's opened opportunities for people, with the degree apprenticeship. I don't think it's relevant necessarily to the Apprenticeship Levy, apart from what I've previously said about being able to access that training that we would not necessarily have normally accessed. We may have ... well, we would've accessed other forms of training, but not necessarily at a degree level. So it's given us an opportunity to access training at a degree level, whether that be an honour's degree or a master's degree.

Interviewer: Do you think that the degree apprenticeships ... Do you think that that approach to delivery and the accessibility of the program, with someone still working, being able to undertake it through the day for example, rather than at night or weekends, do you think that whole degree apprenticeship has made a considerable difference to the likelihood of [company name] putting staff on a degree or a master's program?

EMP01: Yes, definitely. The program's been so flexible that although staff are given time to attend the lectures, they're also given time within

their contracted hours to undertake other off-the-job training, whether that be research, or assignment writing, or reading, or whatever. The degree apprenticeship has allowed that to happen.

EMP01:   Also, being able to deliver within the workplace has made it more accessible to people who may not have necessarily wanted to go into university because they may never have been to university and it could be quite daunting attending a university, one, that's full of younger people who've gone onto do their degrees.

EMP01:   Alternatively, other types of training programs could potentially be on an evening. So being able to do it during the day takes away that need for people to then go and do evening release, if you like, evening classes after work, which adds pressure onto employees as well.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: In terms of the information on the courses and providers, is that something that [company name] went out to find information about providers and the courses available, or was it an approach or approaches by providers to [company name]? Who was driving that process?

EMP01:   Well [company name] were driving that in that we went to get ... We looked to see the different types of delivery, because it's delivered ... You would not believe how differently it's delivered depending on where you go. So for example, if you were going to a university, universities could have it so it is block release once a month, and there are some of the providers that it's once a week, there are some of the providers that it's on an evening.

EMP01:   But the thing that swung it was the being able to shape the model to fit our needs, rather than us having to fit into a model that was

already there at a university, and having it on our premises as well has allowed staff to access it more readily.

Interviewer: Do you see that in any way changing higher education? Where traditionally students would need to go to a physical university. Do you see [company name] almost as an organization, as an employer, as almost becoming part of that university or that higher education?

EMP01: Yes would be the simple answer to that. So [company name] as an employer can ... Sorry, what was the question again?

Interviewer: What I'm wondering is, so where universities are traditionally a building and a campus, and students need to go to that-

EMP01: Yeah, it's more [crosstalk 00:18:06].

Interviewer: Yeah, but I'm also wondering whether, with you saying the delivery takes place at [company name], have you, or even thought about, [company name] as an employer almost becoming a part of that university or higher education? Do you think that in the future, higher education will be something that can take place actually within a company?

EMP01: Absolutely.

EMP01: Because we're using the physical resource here in the company, and other companies will be doing the same, as long as we have access, and our employees have access to the necessary resources that they need to be able to continue their studies and achieve their qualifications, for me that could happen anywhere.

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

EMP01:   I would say though, it is still important to get the groups of students together, and to have that community, rather than it being a purely distance-learning type program. So it is important that it doesn't become that, but the ability to be able to have those types of programs happening in the workplace is very beneficial, and it does make an employer part of that system.

Interviewer: Is it important to you that the deliverer has good links with industry?   That the tutors can bring their experience into the classroom?

EMP01:   I think tutors must have real world experience. It gives a form of validity to their teaching. They might have real world examples and means they will better understand the realities of some of the pressure the learners face..

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: Just going back, I've got one question that I thought of. In terms of the sort of return on investment, do you think that, I mean, [company name] as an organization, is looking for a financial return from the program? If so, is there a way to measure that?

EMP01:   When you say financial return from the program, it would be more ... for me, because it's a management program, it would be more about the retention of staff, and the management styles which would allow staff to thrive, and to want to stay with [company name]. Therefore cutting those costs of replacing the staff and having that turnover would be the key thing for me.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative), okay. Thanks for that.

Interviewer: Just in terms of as a work-based ... No, let me ask you one more just in terms of the training itself, or the learning program. Does

[company name] have a way of evaluating the impact of the training, or will they have when the training's finished, for example?

EMP01: I'd like to think yes, we would have, to be able to evaluate whether it has been beneficial. That will be around the views of those who've participated, their achievements on the program, their changes in their behaviors. I would like to think we have a mechanism to be able to measure that, but we've got a little while to go yet. So that actually hasn't yet been devised.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Is your perception that the Apprenticeship Levy, do you see it as a public source of funding or as a private source of funding?

EMP01: That's interesting, yeah. I see it personally as a private source of funding, because it comes from those employers their pay bills, and it then goes into a government pot, but it starts as a private source of funding that then gets put in as a tax to then source it. So it starts as private, then turns into public when it gets put into that HMRC pot, and is then used to fund apprentices.

Interviewer: Do you think it makes any difference from either [company name]'s perspective as an ... Well, no, specifically from [company name]'s perspective as an employer, do you think it makes any difference whether the fund is public or private in terms of what [company name] is expecting as a result of the program? So what I'm really asking is do you think it influences [company name] in terms of what they're expecting as a return?

EMP01: I think that because [company name] co-fund it, we are paying a contribution and then the government is paying the rest, that type of funding is more public. If we were a levy payer, and therefore

we were using our levy pot to fund all of our apprenticeships, then I would see that more as private. If we run out of levy pot, then obviously it then flips into the public funding bit. However, for me it makes no difference whether it is public or private funded, or my perception of it being public or private, we would still want to access that funding.

Interviewer: So there's research, both in America and in the UK, that there's a lot of talk in terms of the student loans. Now, because students are investors, or at least co-investors in their learning, that their expectations are that there should be a financial return for them, which is very different from publicly funded training. There's evidence that suggests that when the learning is publicly funded, there's an expectation from both the learners who are receiving the education, but also from the wider public group, that there should be a public return, that the actual program, the higher education program in particular, should benefit, it should have a civic return.

Interviewer: So what I'm wondering is what impact the employer ... as a co-investor, whether there's really any interest in a civic return, or a personal return for the member of staff, or for the employer if it is largely geared towards the actual return for the employer.

EMP01: For a civic return, that would be something that I wouldn't personally expect to see. I think any form of contribution raises expectations from the customer, whether that be students as customers through the student loans system, or employers as customers through levy or co-investment, and in contributing anything, you expect a certain standard.

EMP01: Regarding the return on investment, employees, we often see figures that people who've done a degree have this much more

earning potential than someone who may not over the course of their lifetime. Regarding this civic, as I say, that is not something that would've actually crossed my mind, whether there would be a civic return on investment. The question, I suppose, is if people do degrees, does it make them better people? I don't know the answer to that.

Interviewer: No, I don't either.

Interviewer: Let me ask you quite a different one. So I'm just ... I'd like to know, as an employer, how important you would say that the work relevance is? So for the likes of the contextualization of assignments, I know you mentioned that delivery takes places at [company name], but this is a different question around the actual content of the program. Just really how important is it to [company name] that in terms of the way that it's delivered, the way it's assessed, and that it's the experiential and contextualization of learning?

EMP01:   Yeah.

EMP01:   I believe that it is important. It is important for our employees who are doing the course to be able to see how the topics that they're doing are relevant, and how they can then develop personally using the theories to then put it into practice. Because it's a degree apprenticeship as well, there are those work-based elements.

EMP01:   I particularly like the way that the final project is not just a theoretical dissertation, that it is actually relevant to work, with it being a project relevant to our organization. It could actually, depending on what it is, and we're not at that point yet, but it could be something that we then implement if it was a significant project that would have a benefit to the business.

EMP01: So for me, it is very important that ... And that is one of the drivers that people want to do it as well. It's not just going to do an academic program, it's relevant to the organization.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewer: In terms of ... just some shorter questions really, but I'm just wondering, there's a lot of talk about social mobility. I'm just wondering, is it something that's ... Was it one of the important factors for [company name] as an employer, for people to come ... for employees to go on the program, was it trying to change that social mobility, or to mobilize members of staff who wouldn't otherwise do a degree?

EMP01: Yeah, definitely. I think that the way that the program's structured, and the way that we can have it on our premises, and the way that it's contextualized to the business, and the fact that we don't have to go and send employees down that traditional university-type route. It does allow those people who may have left school with no higher qualifications, or any qualifications, to actually access something where they can be supported in a nurturing way, and taken through their three years to get to a degree.

EMP01: So that is really important, and having degree apprenticeships definitely allows that to happen. People who may never have thought about going to university can now access those courses, and improve their own ideas and career prospects, and progress.

Interviewer: Now, going back to something, you mentioned the 20% off-the-job element. I'm just wondering, how significant a barrier is that to participation?

EMP01: It's difficult. If you equate this to one day a week then it does become problematic, particularly if you've got managers on the

program who have got a significant operational role to play in the company. Having them away for a day a week would not work for us. Although I am fully aware that the 20% off-the-job training is a requirement of any apprenticeship program, however, one size doesn't necessarily fit all. Being able to use a variety of different methods in order to do that 20% off-the-job training is really helpful, and being provided with examples of what that can look like has also been beneficial.

EMP01: I personally think that the 20% off-the-job training comes from those older types of apprentices where people go for day release to learn to be an electrician, or learn to be a plumber. It's not necessarily fit for purpose for every work place. I do have friends and acquaintances in the manufacturing sector who would not be able to, in a million years, release people for 20% off-the-job training. So therefore it's a barrier, but it hasn't been a barrier for us. We've overcome that, but there are definitely sectors where it is a barrier.

8.3.3.2 EMP02

Interviewer: This is interview EMP02. EMP02, can I start just by asking you about the 10% co-investment? I'm curious. I know it doesn't directly affect the levy payers, but I'm just curious to know what your thoughts are regarding the decision that the ESFA made, or that the government made, to reduce the 10% co-investment to 5% for non-levy payers? Do you think that's going to make any difference to non-levy payers in whether they put people on the apprenticeship standards?

EMP02: I mean I don't have any hard and fast data to support my opinion on this, but I do think that an employer who wasn't willing to pay 10%, I can't really see why a 5% reduction is going to provide sufficient stimulus to increase the uptake of apprenticeships with non-levy employers. It's such a small amount. I have the feeling that if there is a barrier to smaller employers actually investing in, on a broader level, investing in apprenticeship liberally, that it isn't that co-investment that is the barrier.

Interviewer: Yes. Do you think the co-investment for smaller companies should be removed altogether or do you think they should co-invest?

EMP02: I'm not entirely certain what the official purpose of the co-investment is, but it's at such a low level that I find it hard to believe that there's much of a monetary value there. If the intention is to get smaller employers to invest in apprentices and apprenticeships, to bring new talent into the business and up-skill existing employees, then I personally think the most effective way to do that would be to remove it altogether.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative) What about for levy payers? Do you feel the same way about levy payers if they spend beyond the amount of money that's in their digital account?

EMP02: Again, I don't have any data that would provide a picture for just how far beyond their pots employers are going. Personally, professionally, I mean I personally, as an employer, don't see the 10% as being a barrier, and certainly in the context, let's say, of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, which is currently at £27,000. As an employer, if I had exhausted the funds in my pot, it'd really be that ... the prospects of paying £2,700 for additional learners on that program, I think that's a very appealing proposition. So I don't see the need to remove that for larger employers.

EMP02: And actually ... Again, this is anecdotal, but in larger employers typically, from my experience, what you find is that they have established HR department, L&D departments. Sometimes they're one and the same. But the point is they have resource in place that is specifically charged with the development of skills within the organization. So I think the 10% doesn't present the same barrier as perhaps it does to smaller organizations who don't have that resource.

Interviewer: Yes. Thanks for that. Just overall in terms of the apprenticeship levy, do you think it's making a difference in any way?

EMP02: Do I think it's making a difference in any way? Yes. Do I think it's making a ... Certainly I think it would be fair to say in the context of up-skilling existing staff in management and leadership, there certainly appears to be ... By all accounts from the industry press, there seems to be a rush on from employers in that area. I would say that again, anecdotally, without having hard and fast data to

support this statement, I would say that on the face of it, it appears that the apprenticeship levy is making a big difference to the up-skilling of existing managers, which is not a bad thing.

Interviewer: Do you think that employers should be able to choose which programs to support and which programs to put their members of staff on? The reason I'm asking that is you've mentioned the leadership and management and the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship. There is some very positive press about the take up, but there's also ... On the contrary, there's some negative press suggesting that the leadership and management higher apprenticeships aren't a true apprenticeship. What are your thoughts as an employer?

EMP02: As an employer, I think it's a very positive possibility to be able to use the apprenticeship levy to, not just up-skill existing managers, but to also perhaps develop individuals, let's say individual contributors and to provide them with the management skills, not necessarily to step up, perhaps, in all occasions or on all occasions, immediately into the role of management, but certainly to prepare them for either a future management role within the business or indeed to help prepare them or help develop their broader career.

EMP02: I think that's hugely positive. One of the biggest challenges, certainly as a leader and a manager within a business ... We run an annual employee engagement survey, and perennial challenges that are revealed from that EES, as we call it, are teamwork and collaboration and communication are the two perennial issues. Now, management, in isolation, can't solve that problem; everybody in the organization has to understand the critical nature of communication, teamwork, collaboration, getting

things done together and through people. So I think it's hugely positive: the ability to up-skill existing members of staff.

Interviewer: In terms of your managers and leaders, has it been possible as an employer at any point in the past, has it been possible to establish either a return on investment or otherwise a return on leadership?

EMP02: I think building on the previous points I mentioned, I think that ... I mean ultimately as the leader of the organization, I have certain targets and KPIs that I am responsible for achieving. And when I say "that I am responsible for achieving," that is the business, the broader business. Really, the two key targets that I'm responsible for ... One is employee engagement and the other is earnings.

EMP02: Provided the actions I take to achieve the targets that are sent against those areas are in line with the business's rules of management, our core values, then really the rest is up to me. So invariably, inevitably I have to cascade that out then through the business. And as I say, those are my KPIs, so what I'm looking to do ... With the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, it has provided, let's say, a stimulus, a level of stimulation that really has ...

EMP02: I don't want to say forced, but it's allowed me to look at putting certain members of staff who are existing managers ... In fact, not all of them are existing managers, but existing members of staff through a management degree. But ultimately, really, in answer to your question, what I'm looking for, I will be looking for positive impact down the line.

EMP02: I know it's very broad. I know it's really quite nebulous, but by improving the management knowledge, skills, and behaviors of my existing managers, and then they are better placed to help

their teams perform better. I'm looking for that to essentially manifest and translate itself through to improved earnings and employee engagement.

Interviewer: Yes. Thanks for that. In terms of the mapping of, or otherwise the analysis of training needs, is that something that you do very formally? Do you follow a particular training-needs-analysis or organizational-needs-analysis model or does it tend to be less formal?

EMP02: I would say it's probably formally informal. Our organization, as you would expect, is very clearly mapped in terms of an organizational structure. That structure details a number of specific job roles. Each of those job roles has a job description, a specification, which details the roles and responsibilities of the post-holder. And really, against the roles and responsibilities and the cascaded objectives, really that will determine ... This is really as far as we take it, but that will determine the capabilities required of that post-holder.

Interviewer: Yes.

EMP02: So not necessarily ... In a way, it's a training needs analysis because if we do identify opportunity for improvement, then we will invest in developing skills to fill or to meet that opportunity, to fill in the gap. But I wouldn't go so far as to say that we approach this under the specific banner of a training needs analysis.

Interviewer: Does the employee get engaged in that process of selection of the course or the program or provider?

EMP02: Yes. Yes, they do. I mean that's not without its challenges. I would say up and down. Being an international, but ostensibly Scandinavian country, or sorry, employer, the organization that I

work for is quite ... Although it's very, very people centric, it's an incredibly people centric organization, it's reasonably autocratic in terms of "This is what we're doing. In fact, this is what we're doing." So in terms of, from a group level down, it may be questioned, "Why? If that is the program that you want your staff members to do, why discuss it with them? Why try to get their buy in? Just tell them they're doing it."

EMP02: So there's a cultural difference between the UK and Scandinavia, but in the same breath I do as a leader, I do engage with the workforce and employees in that decision making. But really the approach we kind of take is maybe a coaching type role, where ... Maybe it's not the best of things per se, but coaching to the extent that we try to lead the employee to the same conclusion that we have in terms of the program and the provider.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. In terms of the apprenticeship levy itself, do you as an employer, paying into that apprenticeship levy through the tax system, do you see the apprenticeship levy as being a public fund or a private fund?

EMP02: Okay. The simple answer to that is that as an employer I would view that as being our money, our fund, if that answers your question.

Interviewer: It does. I mean do you think that … unpcking that off, taking it to the next step, do you think it matters whether ... Does it matter to you if you see it as a public or private fund? What I'm really getting at is does it influence in any way your expectations as a result of using the fund? I can explain a bit more if you don't quite know what I'm asking.

EMP02: Well, I mean what I can say is it doesn't impact or affect my expectations. My opinion is, my viewpoint is that, as an

organization, we have a ring-fenced pot of money that we can use on a variety of different apprenticeship programs and if we exhaust the funds that are available to us, then 90% of the cost of any further training have been met by government, so I'm pragmatic enough not to get caught up on really whether it's public or private.

Interviewer: Just going back to a previous point that you made regarding your role as a leader, to an extent the metrics that you have relate to staff retention and to achievement towards the key performance indicators. So I'm reading into that or translating that as you're saying that there are two things, both support the organization, but one also supports the learners.

Interviewer: So essentially the return from the program supports members of staff and helps to retain them, but also helps the organization to achieve its targets. So what I'm asking really in terms of the apprenticeship levy and whether it's perceived as public or private is around this idea that in particular a higher education should have a civic or a social return.

Interviewer: It's a question that I have been asking employers, and there seems to be a great deal of difference between what employers and learners expect from the program, and the likely outcomes, and the perception amongst certainly academic staff within institutions. Do you, as an employer, have you given any real thoughts to members of staff on the Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship program that they should become essentially better citizens and that there should be a civic or a social return as a result of them being on the program?

EMP02: As an employer, as an organization, as I've touched upon, we do have a set of core values that really act as a guiding light to

everything we do within our organization and the way we do it. The way we conduct ourselves, the way we deal with employees, the way employees deal with suppliers, they deal with each other. Really they're a guiding light to everything we do within our business, and really at the heart of our core values, really the underlying, I would say, driver is sustainability, doing the right thing.

EMP02: And I appreciate that that will differ from organization to organization, but it's certainly served our purposes for an awful long time. And I think by any individual company standards, I think our organization is viewed as being a good civic person in its own right. I think authenticity is really important as well. I find it hard to believe that ...

EMP02: Although not directly and explicitly articulated in terms of our staff's civic responsibility and duty as people, as a leader I find it difficult to see that my people can be different people, let's say, at work and away from work. And that's what we want: we want authentic people who can be themselves throughout all aspects of their lives. So although it's not, as I say, explicitly stated, there is an underlying ...

EMP02: I not going to say assumption, but there is an underlying ... I'm going to have to say assumption, that our people will be ... that they will carry forward the core values of the organization into their personal lives. And really what we're looking to do here ... When we employ people at the outset, we're looking for individuals who already share the core values of the organization. I know I'm waffling a bit here, but it's a ... Yeah, I'm finding it an awkward one to answer.

Interviewer: Yes, and it seems to be across the board that that has been the case. What you've described there is something that applies to all staff, though, not just those undertaking higher education. So is it an expectation specifically from a higher education degree apprenticeship that you think there should be a difference amongst that member of staff from their colleague who potentially undertakes the level five framework or standard?

EMP02: The simple answer to that would be no.

Interviewer: Thank you.

EMP02: We don't.... or differentiation aspect.

Interviewer: Thank you for that. In terms of the work-based learning element of the program and the relevance of that in terms of contextualization, I'm just wondering how important is that to you as an employer?

EMP02: I think it's very important. I think it is very important. Again, I come back to our annual employee engagement survey in terms of teamwork and collaboration. What we tend to find is that teamwork and collaboration can be eroded. Where there was an interface between, let's say, different teams and different departments, different functions, there seems to be often a void, a black hole.

EMP02: So it's not just the contextualization of the program, but then what the program covers. When I think about the business finance module; if somebody from, let's say, business development or sales and marketing, somebody from operations attending the program, when they are undertaking the business finance module...

EMP02:   By its very nature, the contextualization of the program requires the individual to really dig into the detail and to get to grips with the reality of our business in that area of the business, which helps them then. They have a much better understanding of their colleagues, in that department, job function, job role, and then all of a sudden there's almost an epiphany in terms of the impact that, let's say, the sales and marketing department and operations department can perhaps have upon the finance function.

Interviewer: Yes.

EMP02:   So I think that contextualization is really important...

Interviewer: Thanks for that.

EMP02:   For a number of different reasons.

Interviewer: Do you see the degree apprenticeships as supporting the social mobility agenda?

EMP02:   Yes, I do, but again I'll just qualify that and say that that's not based on hard and fast evidence that I have available to me, but I think it does, yes.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you as an employer? I mean is it something that you take into consideration when deciding upon the program or is it more of maybe a happy accident?

EMP02:   Maybe even somewhere in the middle of those two. I think it does, yes. Again, coming back to the point of authenticity, I do think that if we can help our staff members become more competent ... Our managers, if we can help our managers become more competent by developing their knowledge and skills and their behaviors as a professional manager; if we can do that and if that then has a positive impact upon the individuals, on their earning

potential, their earning ability because they're better at their job, they get improved results, the business is doing better, then, coming back again to the principal of sustainability, that has to be a good thing for the business and for society as a broader map of course.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. There's been a lot of talk and a lot of press around the 20%-off-the-job element. I'm just wondering whether having apprentices off the job for 20% of the time, whether it's a barrier within your employer or not.

EMP02: When I think about the people who are in the program, it makes not a jot of difference to us, to be honest. As I said earlier, I have a set of targets that I have to achieve every year. That's cascaded down to different functions and different people within the business. Any discussion with any member of staff in terms of developing their selves, certainly let's say on the degree apprenticeship or via the degree apprenticeship, that doesn't absolve those individuals of their scorecard targets. They still have to achieve the targets that have been agreed upon, and I expect them, given the level of seniority they have, I expect them to manage their schedule, their time allocation, their project, their workload as they see fit.

Interviewer: In terms of UCQ as a provider, do you think that UCQ understands business, understands employers?

EMP02: Do I think that UCQ understands employers?

Interviewer: I was going to ask whether you think UCQ has strong industrial links, but what I'm really trying to understand is whether there's a difference between the kind of understanding of maybe some of the tensions and pains that you might have as an employer and

whether you perceive that as being different from A. N. Other University?

EMP02: I think there's scope for improvement, and I don't think there's any lack of desire to understand business, but I guess gaining access to that knowledge is another thing. I do think that there's a bit of a gap in terms of, let's say, academic understanding and knowledge and really what happens at the coal face in the real world. Again, I know it's perhaps not a very helpful or overly helpful answer. In most businesses, the pace is relentless.

EMP02: It's absolutely relentless, and what that requires is a level of pragmatism and flexibility and innovation. Almost every hour of every day things are changing, but that is business. That's the way it is. And the difference between the businesses who succeed and fail; I would say part of the difference is that those who succeed, one: they recognize that that's the way business is and two: they have people who are really good at dealing with that in a pragmatic and flexible way.

EMP02: So understanding that and shaping a program around that, I think that's really, really important. However, UCQ is also a business, so in terms of being able to scale up that flexible model, you can only have so many dimensions. There can only be so much flex, otherwise, you'll have chaos on your hands. There's certainly an amount of ... There's a bit of a knowledge gap that I would suggest could be filled. Equally UCQ needs to understand our staff and do more to get working together. Because that is key to any LandM program.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interviewer: Picking up on your last point. Have you witnessed any changes in this respect?

EMP02: What? Staff working together. As a result of the programme do you mean?

Interviewer: Yes.

EMP02: Have I noticed a difference?.......Yes, I suppose I have, but there is scope for improvement. This is a management programme. I would expect my managers to be working together both on and off the programme.

Interviewer: In terms of UCQ as a provider, do you think that UCQ lecturers or tutors have enough industry experience and is that important to you?

EMP02: I want my staff to come back to me and say "That lecturer really knows what they're talking about". That means not just the theory, which is clearly important, but an understanding that things are not simple. The application of the theory is possibly more important.

Interviewer: Yes. I've got one final area of question, and that is relating to what is often referred to as place based.

EMP02: Say that again.

Interviewer: Place based. What I mean by that is considering universities, especially civic universities, but also polytechnics was this idea of place based and that they were both of a place and for a place. For example, Newcastle Polytechnic was both based within the city of Newcastle and was also very much for Newcastle. So in terms of supporting potential students from the local schools and colleges into local employment and working with local employers.

Interviewer: So very much of a place and was very much based within Newcastle without the kind of satellite facilities that they might

have more of now, but also supporting, as I say, the local employers. And also the same with the civic universities such as Newcastle University. It was both based and is based and spread throughout Newcastle, very much a part of Newcastle City, but also supporting the civic and social side of Newcastle.

Interviewer: And a lot of the institutes, in fact most of them, follow either the civic university or the former polytechnic type model of being place based, but there are changes. I'm just sort of mindful that, with the degree apprenticeships and with employers who are national, that model doesn't necessarily fit because if a national employer ...

Interviewer: They may want to select 10, 20, 30 different institutes to deliver a degree apprenticeship, but it seems more likely that they would prefer to have a relationship with a national provider. And that means quite a significant change, because it either means that a place-based institution needs to give up that place-based nature to become. A national provider or it means potentially new alternative providers who are national. I'm just wondering what your thoughts are around that?

EMP02: Crikey. Okay. Again coming back to the principal of sustainability, I think it's sensible that all organizations understand and exercise their corporate social responsibility. As I say, that really is doing the right thing and being seen to do the right thing. It is really at the heart of sustainability, and that's not seeming to do the right thing, but that is doing the right thing. I think all organizations have that responsibility, but that said, technology is changing the world.

EMP02: The world is changing. It's changing in front of us right here, right now, at a heck of a pace, so historic boundaries are shifting. And I think for a business to survive, it has to adapt and it has to be

able to flex, change its model, move with the times. And if the scope of its corporate and social responsibility have to change and shift, then so be it. It still has that responsibility, but the way in which that perhaps manifests itself and the beneficiaries of that, that might shift and change. So that would be my response to that.

Interviewer: And just finally, sort of taking that a step further, you mentioned the technology and the removal of the geographical boundaries.

EMP02:   Yes.

Interviewer: I just wonder what are your thoughts about the physical place of higher education? Whereas traditionally there is a view, quite a widely-held view that, the campus is the most important aspect of an institution. And there's almost a view that by being a part of that campus, by being on campus, that students, almost by osmosis, absorb knowledge. As the degree apprenticeships are delivered often within the company, I'm just wondering whether you think that the company, the employer is essentially becoming a part of that higher education experience. Almost becoming the university in its own right.

EMP02:   I think that's right, yes. Yes, I do think that. And I do think, as you say, for ... Certainly for our organization to really unlock its true potential, we need to get as many people within the business, within the organization developing their capabilities, learning, growing their knowledge and their skills, becoming better at what they do.

EMP02:   Again, I come back to our annual employee engagement survey and look at the 50 or so questions that are specifically asked within that. The notion of a degree apprenticeship and work-based learning, if our staff sign up to something such as a degree apprenticeship and then that, again, that stimulates and fires off

a desire for ongoing learning and knowledge, development, then yes.

EMP02:   And that piece around ... If I come back to one of the perennial challenges that reveals itself in the EES that's around teamwork and collaboration,;if we can have our staff, as you say, learning together as well as working together and growing together, then if that is consistent with the ethos and the spirit of a conventional university, then yes, I think that is a very true statement.

Interviewer: Thanks for that. I've asked all the questions that I have. Is there anything that you want to add or anything that you think I should've asked that I didn't?

EMP02:   No, nothing specifically springs to mind. No, nothing specifically springs to mind.

Interviewer: Okay. Thanks for that.

8.3.3.3 EMP03

Interviewer: This is interview EMP03. Can I start by asking you about the 10% co-investment? What are your thoughts regarding the decision to reduce the 10% co-investment to 5% for non-levy payers? Do you think that's going to make any difference to non-levy payers in whether they put people on the apprenticeship standards?

EMP03: This idea of 10% is one that comes up in sales. Someone might do something is the price changes by 10%, it is sort of like a cut off point. So I think reducing to 5% will make a difference to some. Maybe the smaller employers.

Interviewer: Thank you. Do you think the co-investment for those smaller companies should be removed altogether or do you think they should co-invest?

EMP03: I think there needs to be a co-investment. When something is free, the companies will think there's a catch. It might even put them off.

Interviewer: What about for levy payers? Do you feel the same way about levy payers if they spend beyond the amount of money that's in their DAS account?

EMP03: The Levy payers are of such a size that I wouldn't have thought it would pose as a barrier to them whether it was 10% or 5%.

Interviewer: In terms of the Apprenticeship Levy, do you think it's making a difference in any way?

EMP03: I think it makes a difference to providers in that companies are having to pay an additional tax that can only be spent with apprenticeship providers.

Interviewer: Do you think it is making any other differences. To employers, to staff?

EMP03: I think it makes a difference to employers, or at least I think it will, it's early days. The degree apprenticeships are new and I think they will make a difference to the effectiveness of staff. The world has changed. The world is changing. Programs need to mirror those changes and support our staff accordingly.

Interviewer: Do you think that employers should be able to choose which programs to support and which programs to put their staff on? What I'm getting at is the negative press saying that managers should not be funded to undertake a degree apprenticeship. That they or their employer should pay for that. What are your thoughts as an employer?

EMP03: I think it should be up to the employer. The degree apprenticeships strengthen the overall apprenticeship brand. Let's face it, apprenticeships lost their good name. I think the new standards are helping to address that.

Interviewer: In terms of your managers and leaders, has it been possible as an employer at any point in the past, has it been possible to establish either a return on investment or otherwise a return on leadership?

EMP03: Our company has grown and is better managed as a result of staff development but it is hard to point to a specific program and say what the return has been. Some of the training we do because we need to do it for compliance. The other staff development has not been possible to calculate a return but it has helped us with staff retention..

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. In terms of the mapping of, or otherwise the analysis of training needs, is that something that you do very formally? Do you follow a particular training-needs-analysis or organizational-needs-analysis model or is it less formal?

EMP03: It hasn't been that formal. Our staff can choose whether to undertake most of the training. Except the compliance training.

Interviewer: Does the employee get engaged in that process of course selection or provider? For the voluntary training.

EMP03: Yes they often do. We require three quotes though, so the employee can't just decide on which trainer to go with.

Interviewer: In terms of the apprenticeship levy, do you as an employer see the apprenticeship levy as being a public fund or a private fund?

EMP03: A public fund.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you if you see it as a public or private fund?

EMP03: Not really.

Interviewer: Do you, as an employer, have you given any real thoughts to members of staff on the Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship program that they should become essentially better citizens and that there should be a civic or a social return as a result of them being on the program?

EMP03: Better citizens. I suppose they might. We would want them to adhere to our core values.

Interviewer: Okay thank you.

Interviewer: In terms of the work-based learning element of the program and the relevance of that in terms of contextualization, I'm just wondering how important is that to you as an employer?

EMP03: It is very important. The programme is, but it isn't tailored, at least I don't think it is. More could be done to relate it to us as a sector.

Interviewer: Do you see the degree apprenticeships as supporting the social mobility agenda?

EMP03: I would say that it probably does.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you as an employer? I mean is it something that you take into consideration when deciding upon the program or is it more of maybe a happy accident?

EMP03: It gives some of our staff the opportunity to gain a degree when they don't have one. Gaining skills and applying them is more important. Knowledge and skills,

Interviewer: There's been a lot of talk about the 20%-off-the-job element. I'm just wondering whether having apprentices off the job for 20% of the time, whether it's a barrier within your employer or not.

EMP03: I am concerned about how it is recorded but not the 20% in itself. If you said to me that my managers were all going to be out of the business one day a week, that would stop me wanting to put them on the program.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ understands your industry, understands employers?

EMP03: I think so. The program appealed to us for that reason.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ lecturers or tutors have enough industry experience and is that important to you?

EMP03: I don't want my staff coming back to me saying that they're been taught to do things in a way that they feel is wrong. Or being told to do things a certain way when that's not how things are really done in reality. So I would say yes, it is important.

Interviewer: Thanks. I've got one final area of question, and that is relating to what is often referred to as place based.

EMP03: What does that mean?

Interviewer: Place based. What I mean is that place-based institutions are based in a place and are for that place. So, for example, Newcastle University is based in Newcastle and is there to benefit Newcastle, at least first and foremost. So if there were students based in London say, Newcastle would have to ask themselves whether it really fits for them.

EMP03: What other type is there? I'm assuming not everyone is placed.

Interviewer: A provider that is subject-based or industry-based. One that specialises in a subject or in supporting a whole industry.

EMP03: I think the OU is an example of a type of university that comes to you rather than you having to go to them. Which is probably why they are so popular with FTSE companies.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. I've asked all the questions that I have. Is there anything that you wish to add or anything that you think I should have asked but that I didn't?

EMP03: No I don't think so.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you for your time.

8.3.3.4 EMP04

Interviewer: This is interview EMP04. Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study, I know how busy you are. Can I start by asking you about the 10% co-investment? What are your thoughts regarding the decision to reduce the 10% co-investment to 5% for non-levy payers? Do you think that's going to make any difference to non-levy payers in whether they put people on the apprenticeship standards?

EMP04: I think it will make a difference.

Interviewer: Do you think the co-investment for those smaller companies should be removed altogether or do you think they should co-invest?

EMP04: I don't really see why there should be a difference for smaller companies, essentially as a large employer we are being penalised for being successful. That doesn't seem right, does it?

Interviewer: Not when you put it like that. What about for levy payers? Do you feel the same way about levy payers if they spend beyond the amount of money that's in their DAS account?

EMP04: Our groups invests so much in training and development, any reduction is helpful. Our non-apprenticeship budget is comparatively small and reducing a co-investment by half is welcome. Having said that I don't think that the overall group will exhaust it's DAS account.

Interviewer: In terms of the Apprenticeship Levy, do you think it's making a difference in any way?

EMP04: It is making a difference to us. We are able to fund degree programmes, as well as other higher programmes, which we

would not have had the budget to do. Well, I would not have had the budget in talent management. Where we have benefitted is that the larger group has not spent its Levy and has kindly allowed us to do so.

Interviewer: Do you think that employers should be able to choose which programs to support and which programs to put their staff on? More specifically, there is the negative press saying that managers should not be funded to undertake a degree apprenticeship. That they or their employer should pay for that. What are your thoughts as an employer?

EMP04:   We are keen on the degree apprenticeships, We were looking for a programme for our managers, we were looking at the senior manager. Yes, we should get to choose. I don't want someone else deciding which programmes my staff should be put on.

Interviewer: In terms of your leaders and managers, has it been possible as an employer, to establish either a return on investment or otherwise a return on leadership?

EMP04:   We have to a degree been able to determine the satisfaction with a programme but no an ROI as such. What was the other one you mentioned?

Interviewer: A return on leadership. It is an expression that McKinsey's and Egon Zehnder use. Not so much a financial return, but a noticeable change in the business as a result of developing the leader(s)

EMP04:   In that case I would say yes, we have seen the return from leadership.

Interviewer: In terms of determining or carrying out an analysis of training needs, is that something that you do very formally? Do you follow a particular training-needs-analysis or organizational-needs-analysis model or is it less formal?

EMP04: We tend to be formal in our approach. We are held accountable for all spend, including use of employee time, so we can't have staff deciding by themselves to go on a programme.

Interviewer: Does the employee get engaged in that process of course selection or provider?

EMP04: Course, yes, sometimes. Provider, never. Sometimes, at C level, we might choose more than one provider and yes, then the employee and their manager might be able to choose. But we usually have one provider. Sometimes it depends on the location.

Interviewer: Can I ask you, in terms of the apprenticeship levy, do you as an employer see the apprenticeship levy as being a public fund or a private fund?

EMP04: A private fund. It is our account. It is our money that is in there.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you if you see it as a public or private fund?

EMP04: I think so, yes. I see it as our money. Our investment in our staff. I think, although I haven't asked them, I think our staff see it as we the employer investing in them.

Interviewer: Have you given any real thoughts to members of staff on the Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship program that they should become essentially better citizens and that there should be a civic or a social return as a result of them being on the program?

EMP04:   (laughs) Is it part of the Standard? Do you mean their change in behaviour?

Interviewer: It is not part of the Standard. I don't mean the measurable behaviours as such. A different civic or social development. Volunteering in the community for example.

EMP04:   If our staff want to volunteer, that is something we would encourage. We are all for engaging with the community.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interviewer: In terms of the work-based learning element of the program and the relevance of that in terms of contextualization, I'm just wondering how important is that to you as an employer? And do you think the CMDA programme is assessed in the best way?

EMP04:   I don't know really. I haven't had any complaints from staff and the updates I get show our staff are engaged with the programme and implementing what they learn. I worked with UCQ on the contextualisation before our staff started on the programme. It could be even more closely related to us and our sector, but we want the balance too. We don't want to be too prescriptive. We want our staff to experience a broader picture than just what happens at [our company]

Interviewer: Do you see the degree apprenticeships as supporting the social mobility agenda?

EMP04:   Yes.

Interviewer: Does it matter to you as an employer? I mean is it something that you take into consideration when deciding upon the programme?

EMP04:   It does matter. We are committed to being fair and equal.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you.

Interviewer: There's been a lot of talk about the 20%-off-the-job element. I'm
               just wondering whether having apprentices off the job for 20% of
               the time, whether it's a barrier within your employer or not.

EMP04:   I have greater concerns with the Level 3 programme. I think the
               providers should be working with the employers to show them
               what can and what can't be recorded as off the job.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ understands your industry, understands
               employers?

EMP04:   I think that UCQ has a good understanding of employers. I think
               staff have some knowledge of our sector but we have had to work
               with UCQ so that the teaching staff know some of the key
               developments that are shaping and that will shape our sector in
               the future.

Interviewer: Do you think that UCQ lecturers or tutors have enough industry
               experience and is that important to you?

EMP04:   Feedback from staff has been positive. UCQ's approach has
               been well received.

Interviewer: Thank you. I have one final area of question, and that is relating
               to what is often referred to as place based.

EMP04:   Okay.

Interviewer: Place based. What I mean is that place-based institutions are
               based in a place and are for that place. So, for example,
               Newcastle University is based in Newcastle and is there to benefit
               Newcastle, at least first and foremost. But [your company]
               operates globally and even in England you have staff in every

area. Are you looking for a national provider or will you look to work with many providers.

EMP04:   We at [our company] look to establish relations with those that want to work with us across the country. Boundaries are shifting and [providers] need to have the same sort of agility, they need to work with us and for us. Yes, they need to do that nationally. But that said, decisions are not made nationally. And we already have relationships with a number of providers and a number of universities. Our size means it is unlikely that we would work with only one provider. There is a risk in having only one provider and a danger of complacency.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. I've asked all the questions that I have. Is there anything that you wish to add or anything that you think I should have asked but that I didn't?

EMP04:   Not that I can think of.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you very much for your time.