



# World class apprenticeships

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# FE Week

## DRILLING DOWN TO ASSESS THE DIFFERENCES

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In the 21st Century, 'apprenticeship' is truly an international word. Almost every English-speaking country in the developed world has an apprenticeship programme, and Central Europe leads the way on learning that combines on-the-job training with qualifications.

But when you drill down to the differences between countries and their programmes, the gaps could not be wider.

That was the purpose of the first world class apprenticeships study tour organised by the International Skills Standards Organisation (INSSO), which led delegates

from Northern Ireland, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada and the United States on a journey of discovery earlier this month.

I was lucky enough to accompany the group, and in this supplement I aim to report back on the lessons we learned on our tour of America and Canada.

The INSSO produced a helpful report on apprenticeships in English-speaking countries last year, from which we present some information on page three to set the scene.

Our first destination was Washington DC's Urban Institute, where speeches from apprenticeships expert Dr Bob Lerman and US Labour Secretary Thomas Perez shed some light on the inside view of apprenticeships, or rather, the lack of, in America. These are covered on pages four and five.

On pages six and seven, we explore the Canadian system, which is governed by the all-powerful Red Seal programme. We also hear from Sarah Watts-Rynard in the first of a series of transatlantic expert pieces aimed at opening up the debate on global apprenticeship policy.

After Canada, our trip took us to South Carolina to investigate one of the US's real apprenticeship success stories. See pages 10

and 11 for the employers' view, and another expert from Apprenticeship Carolina's Brad Neese.

Our tour was led by Labour MP John Healey, whose link to the FE and skills sector remains strong a decade after his term as England's first adult skills minister ended. We feature some of his speech to the Urban Institute, along with an exclusive interview, on pages 12 and 13.

Finally, on pages 14 and 15, we have a debrief with INSSO chief executive Tom Bewick and other delegates on how the tour shaped their views on apprenticeships in the global arena.



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# Who's performing on the apprenticeship front?

Much of the comparative information available on apprenticeships in English-speaking countries comes from last year's report, 21st Century Apprenticeships, by the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards.

The report offered a comparative review of apprenticeships in Australia, Canada, Ireland, and the United States, with reference to the findings of Doug Richard's review of apprenticeships.

The report concluded that demand for apprentices in England may fall in the short to medium term and that regulation and market forces would both play a part.

It added: "A quality 'Kitemark' — or Richard-Compliant approval scheme — may be required in order to secure greater trust in the apprenticeship brand in purely market-based systems, consumers look for impartial signs of value and credibility."

It also concluded that an employer-driven support system was needed, that will require sustained investment, and added that simpler occupational standards were also necessary.

It said a combination of end-testing and competency assessment was likely to work best and that giving individual purchasing power to employers was important, as was enabling collective means of investment to flourish.

It said apprenticeships

should provide the right balance of incentives and rewards, and concluded: "No one country has developed the perfect system of apprenticeships, be they the famed Germanic models, with their emphasis on dual systems of training and employer engagement, or the ones in English-speaking countries (similar to the ones examined in this report) which operate alongside culturally pervasive attitudes that place a lot more value on academic routes to success."

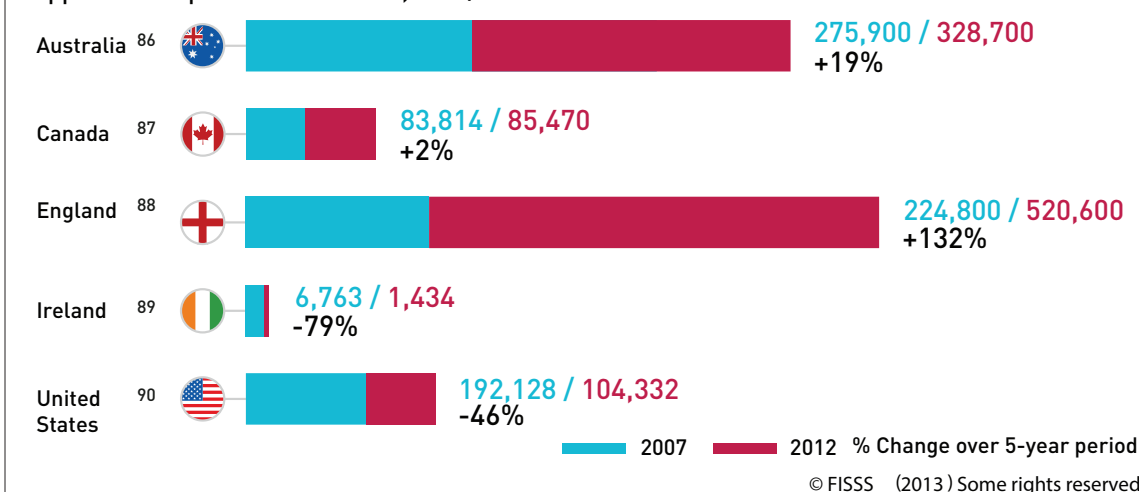
"It is fair to say that every apprenticeship model has both strengths and weaknesses."

"The comparative information contained in this and case studies of what other countries are doing will be useful to policymakers in a number of countries, including the Trailblazers in England: ie, the companies and industry groups appointed to trial and test out implementation of the Richard Review reforms."

The facts and figures on this page show the key findings of the report, and shows interesting trends towards different industries in different countries.

It also shows the relative growth of apprenticeships in different locations, including an apparent 132 per cent rise in apprenticeship starts in England in five years to 2012, a figure which is widely contested in the UK.

### Apprenticeship commencements, 2011/12



### Traditional to expansive forms of apprenticeship

#### Ireland



- Top occupations**
1. Construction
  2. Electrical
  3. Motor mechanics



#### USA



- Top occupations**
1. Electrical
  2. Plumbing
  3. Machinists



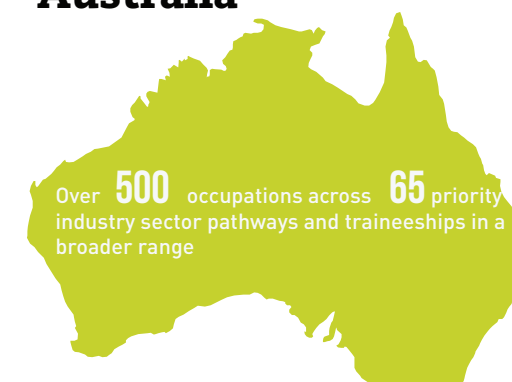
#### Canada



- Top occupations**
1. Construction electrician
  2. Automotive service technician
  3. Carpenter



#### Australia

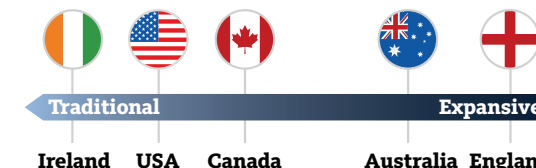


- Top sectors**
1. Business services
  2. Construction, plumbing & services
  3. Tourism, hospitality & events



#### England

- Top sectors**
1. Health & social care
  2. Customer service
  3. Management



From left: Phil Hurford from CompeteNZ, Raymond Patel, from merSETA, Yvonne Croskery, from the Northern Ireland government, Brendan Spence, from Apprenticeship Carolina, Susan Pretulak, from Apprenticeship Carolina, Wayne Adams, from merSETA, Emma Evans, from INSSO, Teri Luther from Apprenticeship Carolina, Freddie Whittaker, from FE Week, Tom Bewick, from INSSO, Dean Rogers, from Employment and Social Development Canada and Brad Neese, from Apprenticeship Carolina

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# Looking beyond the German model



The USA is trying to learn from successful apprenticeship systems around the world.

During a speech to the Urban Institute, Dr Robert Lerman, a fellow of the institute and founder of the American Institute for Innovative Apprenticeship, set out his views on other systems and what his country needs to learn from its allies abroad. These are extensive excerpts of his speech.

Recently, I was asked to review a draft chapter of a book by a Nobel Prize-winning economist. He was talking about different options for young people and he had a little section in which he [talked about] the German apprenticeship model, as if this was this odd thing which operates in Germany and maybe a few other central European countries.

But of course this is not true. As John [Healey MP] has mentioned and others have mentioned, if anything it's the US that lags behind. It's the rest of the world that has

moved up. One problem with the idea that this was a German apprenticeship system is that people then say if we're going to have apprenticeship we are going to need to copy the German model, the German system, we're going to need to have all the things that operate in Germany in terms of labour regulation, a very strong union movement, and chambers of commerce that oversee everything.

But if this premise were true, how can it be that so many countries outside of Germany have managed to successfully develop apprenticeship? If you remember one thing from my talk, it should be that apprenticeship is widespread in the world and growing in many advanced countries.

Now let me just take a moment to say what apprenticeship is. It's a combined structure of programme of work-based and classroom training usually lasting two to four years. It can be competency-based. It leads to valued occupational credentials, it involves actual employment and value-added activity by the apprentice while he or she is learning.

It involves contractual obligations by the employer and by the apprentice. It's different from school-based vocational education, which is very widespread because it includes a very strong work-based component, real jobs, pay, close mentoring by a professional. In our community colleges we might have one mentor or adviser for every 500 to 1,000 students. In apprenticeships you have a mentor for every two or three.

It's unlike on-the-job training because apprenticeships include related courses. It's a kind of college plus. The development of real mastery of an occupation and not just the job. And because of that apprentices learn employability skills in the context of the occupation that they're working, not in some abstract sense, and all the elements of employability that go with that.

Many international organisations have supported the expansion of apprenticeship. It's interesting that people see apprenticeships as having a variety of purposes. One is to deal with youth unemployment, another is to fill skills gaps,

another is to raise wages and still others to increase mobility.

So how do the non-Germanic countries build these robust systems? First of all we see a lot of variation.

The Germanic countries have a very high share, and when I say Germanic I mean Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. Denmark is not Germanic but it has also a very high share of young people going through apprenticeships. In many other countries, in Europe as well, you have a lot of people in vocational education but not with the work-based learning.

France, for example, has 48 per cent of people in voc ed but only about 22 per cent in the combined system. Belgium has only 3 per cent. So there was this notion as I mentioned before, and Paul Ryan, a British expert on apprenticeships said in 2001: 'The weakness of collective action in the more deregulated UK economy impedes the current policy of reviving apprenticeships'.

He wrote 10 years too early I think, because he was proved wrong.

What elements do we need to make apprenticeship happen? If you don't need the full German system, what do you need? And I would say you need several points, especially when you're trying to expand apprenticeship, not just keep it going at a current level.

One thing you need is effective branding. You need an effective marketing strategy at a global level, and the UK has done that and you'll hear later about South Carolina and how they have managed to do that.

So you've had leadership at the aggregate level, with effective branding. You need a certification body to oversee the content of apprenticeship. But you also need to reach down to the individual employer, and you need to have some mechanism of that, because as my friend Brad Neese will say, talking in committees is not enough. You have to actually make the sale with individual employers.

Finally, you need to recognise that apprenticeship can cover a wide spectrum of occupations. On the website of our institute, we have five countries and 10 occupational clusters, and you can see in each of these countries what occupational clusters are covered, and you can see health and information technology, finance. Barclays Bank has hired 1,000 apprentices. CVS pharmacy in the US, 650. Finland has entrepreneurship apprenticeships, so it covers a wide range.

What we have learned is if you build a good apprenticeship programme, the youth will come. Many people say Americans only want to send their kids to college. That may be true, but when you build a good system, we find everywhere, young people are applying in very large numbers.

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Apprenticeships allow Americans to "punch their ticket to the middle class," according to US Labour Secretary Thomas Perez (pictured).

But, speaking to a seminar at Washington DC's Urban Institute earlier this month, he conceded the US still had a lot to learn from other countries on recruiting apprentices.

In a speech punctuated with metaphors, Democrat Mr Perez said: "Present company excluded, the population is aging, and we need to account for that. I will note, by the way, that the average age of a Latino living in Wisconsin is 17. We know where the future workforce comes from in the apprenticeship context.

"I was in Philadelphia recently at the Finishing Trades Institute which is a wonderful collaboration of labour and management and I met a number of 20-year-old kids who had graduated recently from the Phil public schools and were in the process of punching their ticket to the middle class.

"I talk to way too many parents and I tell them apprenticeships are a great opportunity and they say: 'No, no, no — my kid's going to college'. Because they have a misconception about what an apprenticeship is. Apprenticeships enable you to punch your ticket to the middle class and enable you to get on the higher education superhighway with on-ramps and off-ramps which will allow you to move flexibly up the ladder.

"That is why it is so critically important to us to engage not just the community colleges and the usual suspects, but to directly engage parents and school superintendents because our colleagues abroad have figured this out.

"When you're 18 years old and you're at that fork in the road, do you do a four-year degree or do you go into the registered apprenticeship track. Both those pathways have equal stature and what we have done in this country, to our detriment, is allow the stature of these programmes to diminish so that parents have a misimpression."

He said the US and its 358,000 registered apprenticeships and 250,000 participating employers paled in comparison to Germany, with 1.8m apprenticeships and 500,000 employers, and said he was happy to be a "thief" and learn from the successes of individual US states like South Carolina, Iowa and Rhode Island, as well as other countries.

He said: "In Germany, employer participation is about 23 per cent and crosses a broad range of industries as opposed to 1 per cent in the US with a heavy concentration in construction.



"I talk to way too many parents and I tell them apprenticeships are a great opportunity and they say: 'No, no, no — my kid's going to college'"

While Germany is clearly one example of leadership in this area, they are not the only one. Other countries, the UK, Switzerland, Canada, Australia who have frankly been doing more in this area. That's why we're here because we're here to fix this.

"We put our money where our mouth is. Just a few weeks ago the President announced the launch of a \$100m [£58.7m] grant programme. That's just the tip of the iceberg because the present budget calls for a four-year \$2bn [£1.1bn] commit with the goal of doubling the number of apprenticeships in the next five years and these funds would provide states and regions with flexible funds to complement their existing efforts to expand registered apprenticeships and address challenges unique to their region.

"It includes offsetting training costs for employers, building infrastructure to support apprenticeships at community colleges and other training providers, supporting collaborative efforts to expand access to employer-provided training. We are already seeing, and you'll hear today about a great deal of innovation in state level efforts in this area. Rhode Island has increased its tax credit for apprenticeship. Iowa is investing \$3m [£1.7m] in apprenticeships.

"We need to continue to look for these promising models, see what we can take to scale and work together because I say this with some frequency. I've seldom had an original idea in my life. I look at my job here today as trolling the nation for good ideas and being a thief in the best sense of

that word."

Mr Perez said he believed apprenticeships had a "huge and bright future" in America, and said he had spoken to businesses all over the US which said they wanted to take on apprentices.

He added: "If you look at the business case, apprentices who complete their programme earn on average \$50k [£29k] a-year. I was at an IBEW apprenticeship programme out in San Francisco and met this guy who was about 24 years old. He said: 'Tom, have you ever watched Willy Wonka?' I said: 'About 20 years ago' and he said: 'I punched the golden ticket'. He was so excited because he had his journeyman's licence and he was on the higher ed superhighway and he was making \$60,000 [£35k] a-year as an electrician.

"Today's apprentice will earn more than \$300,000 [£176k] more in wages and benefits over their lifetime than their peers who aren't apprentices. Apprenticeship provides a spectacular return on investment for everybody involved — labour, management and government. For every taxpayer dollar we spend on apprenticeship, we see \$27 [£15] in benefits.

"But we have to also as we have this conversation have an honest conversation and the fact of the matter is over the course of the last few decades, we have somehow under-invested in the area of apprenticeship. We have under-valued, underappreciated and under-utilised apprentices."

# Canadian system offers Red Seal approval for trades

When it comes to Canadian apprenticeships, one symbol stands out beyond all others.

The Red Seal has been a beacon for apprenticeship standards since 1959, linking Canada's 13 provinces and territories and uniting them under one banner.

Our more conservative American cousins might cry regulation and interference when presented with the Red Seal programme, but when you look at the Canadian system, you can see why a national standard is needed.

Apprenticeships are managed slightly differently in all 13 different provinces and territories, which, according to Catherine Scott from the Canadian government, makes for an interesting challenge in joined-up thinking.

"The administration of the apprenticeship system is sometimes within a provincial department. In other cases it is in an arms-length agency," she said. "That is the case in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Ontario has recently moved to that model with the College of Trades and Nova Scotia is in the process of moving to that model.

"They are looking at ways to better engage industry in their apprenticeship programmes and so the creation of an arms-length agency allows them to have a governing board composed of industry which they work more directly with.

"Given there are 13 different apprenticeship systems, it does bring its own challenges. Each province decides on the lengths of its programmes. It decides which occupations it designates for apprenticeship training. It decides whether that training is voluntary or compulsory,

the training sequences and so on. It does create a real patchwork of systems.

"But at the same time there are many commonalities and we have worked with provinces and territories for at least the last 60 years to bring some commonality and part of that is through the Red Seal programme."

As in England, Canadian apprentices are usually aged 16 and over and have normally completed high school. They have to find an employer and an agreement between business and worker is then registered with the authority in whichever province or territory the company is based in.

Apprenticeships are 80 to 90 per cent workplace-based, with the remaining 10 to 20 per cent technical training usually taken in eight-week blocks at colleges, training centres or with private companies.

Training programmes last between two and five years (the average is four) and those who already have some on-the-job experience can skip ahead.

One big difference between Canada and other English-speaking countries is the number of trade areas represented in the official programme. The number can grow in England, but is static in Canada.

Unlike other countries with apprenticeship programmes rapidly expanding across many different sectors, Canada's is focused on 55 trade areas where Red Seal approval is concentrated. These are all in traditional trades like carpentry, plumbing, ironwork and bricklaying — perhaps the areas more associated with the apprenticeships of old.

Another striking revelation when comparing Canada's system with its US



Bobby Watt, president of RJW-Gem Campbell Stonemasons Inc, is the level of investment.

Canada's federal government spends \$CAD 500m (£274m) a-year, which is filtered down to the provinces and territories or paid out in generous \$CAD 4,000 (£2,193) annual grants for apprentices.

If an employer isn't willing to pay an apprentice while they're at college, the federal government steps in with employment insurance benefits.

But is it paying off? The number of registered apprentices in Canada was 340,000 in 2011. For 2012, that figure is expected to be closer to 360,000.

Of that number, around 80 per cent are registered in Red Seal trades. "When we look at trends, the number of total registrations and completions have doubled over the last decade. One of the biggest challenges we face in Canada is our completion rate has remained flat at about 50 per cent, so only one in two individuals are actually completing their training.

"Some people say maybe that's not an issue, because if we look at the individuals who are not completing are doing, many are still working in the skilled trades and earning a very decent income.

"One of the challenges in terms of encouraging individuals to complete is that there are, especially in Western Canada, some great employment opportunities and not necessarily the incentive to complete the programmes."

Another "challenge", according to Ms Scott, is the age at which people decide to take on apprenticeships. These programmes are not, as they are in other countries, an alternative to higher education, but something which happens later in life.

"The median age of new registrants into the apprenticeship training programmes is

## Case study

RJW-Gem Campbell Stonemasons Inc is a keen supporter of the apprenticeship programme, and will one day have the work of its proud apprentices and other employees on show at the heart of Canada's political system — Parliament's West Block. President Bobby Watt said: "We find that our apprentices in general come from two sources, either from sons and daughters and nephews and nieces of people we already know, or through the college's historical masonry training programme.

"At the moment we have 65 apprentices on a crew that is about 180 strong so we have one in three. To get the proper ratio of masons, a lot of these apprentices are registered to the union because at the moment there's a really stupid rule which says you have to have five journeymen for every apprentice."

25," she said. "The median age for completion is 28. I guess generally what we see is individuals registering fairly late, so often after they have had another career and have decided to turn to the trades or have been working in the area but decide late in the day to register for a formal training programme."

The other challenges will seem very familiar to English lawmakers. A large skills shortage, with vacancies in the construction industry alone expected to reach 250,000 by 2021. Low levels of employer engagement, with only one-in-five construction trades employers actually hiring apprentices.

## Selection of the 55 Red Seal trades

Agricultural Equipment Technician	Insulator (Heat and Frost)
Landscape-Horticulturist	Ironworker (Generalist)
Automotive Painter	Ironworker (Reinforcing)
Automotive Service Technician	Painter and Decorator
Baker	Parts person
Boilermaker	Plumber
Bricklayer	Power line Technician
Cabinetmaker	Recreation Vehicle Service Technician
Carpenter	Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
Concrete Finisher	Mechanic
Construction Craft Worker	Rig Technician
Construction Electrician	Roofer
Cook	Sheet Metal Worker
Electric Motor System Technician	Sprinkler System Installer
Floorcovering Installer	Steamfitter/Pipe fitter
Glazier	Tile setter
Hairstylist	Tool and Die Maker
Heavy Duty Equipment Technician	Tower Crane Operator
Heavy Equipment Operator	Transport Trailer Technician
Industrial Electrician	Truck and Transport Mechanic
Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	Oil Heat System Technician
Instrumentation and Control Technician	Welder

Source: www.red-seal.ca



**SARAH WATTS-RYNARD**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CANADIAN APPRENTICESHIP FORUM

## The Canadian 'journey person's' experience

Key to understanding Canada's apprenticeship system is an appreciation of the scale and diversity of the country, says Sarah Watts-Rynard.

We recently welcomed a delegation of apprenticeship stakeholders from the UK, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, South Africa and South Carolina to Ottawa, Canada. What struck me as we talked was, though each system varies in its approach and execution, there are opportunities to learn from each other's lessons and build on each other's successes.

As background, understanding apprenticeship in Canada requires one to understand the diversity of the country's industrial realities and the massive size of the country, stretching between three oceans. Apprenticeship is regulated by the 13 provinces and territories, each

with systems that respond to the unique needs of industry in that region. Together, the systems regulate more than 300 occupations, the vast majority in hands-on skilled trades occupations best taught on the job.

Canadian apprenticeships offer advanced technical skills through a combination of practical work experience and intensive technical instruction. Some 80 to 85 per cent of the training is done with an employer and the other 15 to 20 per cent in post-secondary institution or union training centre.

Advantages to this form of training include the ability to earn while you learn, practical hands-on learning and a wealth of job opportunities. The average duration of an apprenticeship is four years, with apprentices making an increasing proportion of a journey person's wage as they progress toward certification.

While apprenticeship systems around the world expand into other occupations, there is little appetite for doing so in Canada. This is due in part to easy access to post-secondary programs in well-equipped colleges and universities with strong connections to industry. Apprenticeship is largely reserved for occupations where a significant proportion of the work has safety implications and is done on jobsites subject to weather conditions — both difficult to replicate in a school environment.

While each of the 13 systems operates independently, a national Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program allows for tradespeople in 57 trades to write a common final exam. The Red Seal endorsement is recognized by employers as an indication of competency and is highly prized among tradespeople. About 80 per cent of all registered apprentices work in Red Seal

When it comes to what Canada contributes to the international discussion, I am drawn to our work to develop a business case for apprenticeship training

trades.

When it comes to what Canada contributes to the international discussion, I am drawn to our work to develop a business case for apprenticeship training. Though a key advantage of apprenticeship is the ability of employers to build a 'custom' workforce while contributing to skills development recognized more broadly in the labour market, Canadian Apprenticeship Forum research shows less than one-fifth of skilled trades employers in Canada are engaged in hiring and training the next-generation workforce.

We've found that employers who train see tangible financial results that continue to increase every year an apprentice is on staff. Our research tells us that for every dollar an employer invests in an apprentice, they see an average return of \$1.47. This is true across 21 trades, regardless of the size of the business or its location.

More than a thousand skilled trades employers we surveyed reported home-grown journeypersons are more productive, make fewer mistakes and have better health and safety records than outside hires. Their investment also pays off in supporting lower turnover rates and success when it comes to recruitment. Employers engaged in training tell us apprenticeship helps them create and sustain a high performance workplace. The challenge, of course, is ensuring non-participating employers are aware of all of these benefits.

As we continue to look for solutions to suit the Canadian environment and its inherent challenges, it was fascinating to begin a conversation with the delegates who visited Canada earlier this month. There is much more to learn and share, and I hope to continue the discussion well into the future.

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# High praise in face of 'little or no government' help

Hundreds of miles from the seat of federal government, South Carolina is one of America's success stories as far as apprenticeships go.

With more than 5,100 apprentices employed by more than 650 companies, the state is an unlikely, but not unsung hero of the US apprenticeships system with praise by the White House and a number of prominent figures.

But in terms of cash incentives for employers, there is not a great amount to separate The Palmetto State from its neighbours. Businesses receive a \$1,000 (£587) tax break for every apprentice, which is a small proportion of the thousands of dollars paid out for tuition and in wages.

The work of Apprenticeship Carolina, which provides free consultancy and advice for employers and works with technical colleges, has been a big factor. When the company launched in 2007, there were just 777 apprentices in the state. There are now more than 10,000.

But when you speak to businesses in South Carolina, the real incentive for taking on apprentices seems to be the end result. In this right-to-work state, where the power of unions is heavily diminished, companies are investing in the training of their workforce with little or no government help, and they remain firmly in the driving seat.

United Tool and Mold, based in upstate South Carolina, started running apprenticeships five years ago and also runs youth apprenticeships for learners of high school age.

Jeremy Arnett, from the firm, said: "Apprenticeship is the lifeline to our

company. A lot of companies talk about capital, and when they talk about capital they talk about budgeting and they want to know where their customers are and where their money is going to be in five years. They want to know what they can spend on machinery.

"But the most important part for us is our human capital, because if we don't have the pipeline of workers ready to take on the business, we won't be here much longer."

What is clear from employers is that their apprenticeship programmes remain flexible. Mr Arnett said apprentices at his firm are paid their hourly rate whether in the classroom or on the factory floor. He was also grateful for the tax credit.

He said: "This transition from youth to adult is an all-expenses-paid two year degree programme. We don't want to take money out of their pockets. These are kids who in the summers are working 45 or 50 hours a-week.

"We pay them to sit in a classroom. If they're in a classroom for 26 hours a week, they're going to get paid for 26 hours. The same wage they would make on the shop floor.

"One of the biggest things with youth that you have to realise is you have to create loyalty. We start our apprentices at \$10 (£5.88) an-hour, because we're fighting McDonald's, we're fighting gas stations, we can't pay \$8.25 an hour because they can make that at a gas station. If you want the cream of the crop you have to pay for it."

But at BMW, which produces 1,100 cars a-day from its US plant in Greer, South Carolina, head of talent management Werner Eikenbusch has opted for a



Apprentices at work at Spartanburg community college

different way of working.

"I do not pay them for sitting in a classroom," he said, "different from one of the other programmes you heard about earlier. I am paying the tuition, and that is a big benefit. We're paying about \$5k (£2,938) a-year which is the tuition for three semesters at a technical college. Plus they're getting \$12 (£7.05) an-hour for the work they do here on the side, and that's

about 20 hours."

Mr Eikenbusch added that BMW did not register its apprentices with the state, but was happy to forego the tax incentive to avoid "red tape". He said the benefits of apprenticeships for the German car manufacturer went beyond cash.

BMW in South Carolina offers apprenticeships in three areas: mechatronics, automotive technicians

and production technicians. Apprentices are recruited when they are high school graduates, and do a two-year degree programme as part of their training.

Mr Eikenbusch said: "We always have done a lot of training of associates, because when we came initially we didn't have anybody that could do bodywork. If you get a ding in the production line, somebody has to get the ding out and we paint the car. We



had to build those people.

"We didn't have automotive technicians, at least not the numbers we needed, so you have a car coming down the line, the window isn't going up and down and somebody has to know why that isn't happening.

"So we pretty much had curricular alone that really was starting almost with electricity 101 all the way to sophisticated

BMW systems but what always bothered me was that we did all this training and people did not get any college credit for it. They had all of that but it didn't do anything to open up additional doors for them.

"I wanted a programme which was really integrated into the US educational pathway, and not something that sits outside of it, because, in the US, we always preach anybody can do anything and become

anything, so how do I sell a programme like this when it's a dead-end road?"

"So that's why we took the approach and said we want to integrate this into the educational system so

I can sell it not only as a programme to get a job in a very interesting field but also a potential career step on which you can build. That's why we've made the two-year degree an integral part of the programme."



**BRAD NEESE**  
 DIRECTOR,  
 APPRENTICESHIP CAROLINA

## Demanding, and warranting, a closer look

Brad Neese outlines how apprenticeships are booming in South Carolina.

Once in a while, you happen across a solution that begs a closer look — an ideal solution perfectly aligned with your organization's productivity and growth goals.

Apprenticeship Carolina may just be that solution.

Housed in the South Carolina Technical College System, this unassuming program is an absolute gem for building a skilled workforce. Apprenticeship Carolina dedicates its resources to increasing registered apprenticeship in the state.

And, we have done just that. South Carolina currently boasts one of the fastest growing apprenticeship systems in the country and is garnering numerous accolades and recognitions nationally and

internationally.

The growth is phenomenal.

Since Apprenticeship Carolina's inception in 2007, the growth in both the number of programs and the number of apprentices has rocketed. Over that time, the number of programs has increased seven-fold from 90 to 665 registered programs. The number of apprentices is over 10,000 from a mere 777 in 2007.

Each month, the program adds around 120 new apprentices and registers one or more programs per week. One-third of participating employers offer programs in more than one occupation.

Our growth strategy sets us apart. We made a conscious decision to break down the traditional barriers to registered apprenticeships. We're redefining a centuries old concept and making it something that has real value for business and industry in South Carolina.

Apprenticeship Carolina proactively reaches out to non-traditional sectors such as healthcare, finance, hospitality and tourism, information technology and advanced manufacturing with the message that apprenticeship has evolved. It is no longer limited to just traditional occupations. These non-traditional sectors can also benefit.

The state's largest employer, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, provides an excellent example. The company has an established apprenticeship program for its information technology staff.

Training manager Garcia Mills-Tate told me: "Apprenticeship programs are a great way for us to grow our own experts in the information technology field. Our partnership with Apprenticeship Carolina and our local technical college has produced a training program that will help Blue Cross/Blue Shield meet its need for

**We made a conscious decision to break down the traditional barriers to registered apprenticeships**

skilled workers.

"As not only one of the state's largest employers but also one that continually earns honours as a top employer, we recognize the need to build talent among our dedicated employees and are firmly committed to creating a culture of

innovation and continuous improvement."

Today in South Carolina, organisations such as CVS Pharmacy, Michelin, Bosch, 3M, Caterpillar and many others have registered apprenticeship programs.

Apprenticeship Carolina's innovative approach has not gone unnoticed.

The White House invited representatives from Apprenticeship Carolina, along with Aiken Technical College, Aiken County School District and Tognum America Inc, to participate in a roundtable discussion focused on youth apprenticeship.

In 2012, the US Department of Labour honoured Apprenticeship Carolina with a 21st Century Innovators and Trailblazers Award. This award recognizes programs for their long-standing success and innovative approaches to training US workers.

A commitment to building South Carolina's talent lies at the heart of

Apprenticeship Carolina's growth. We have a very business-centric focus. As we introduce the benefits of registered apprenticeship, companies see the value in it — higher skills, decreased turnover, consistent training and a reliable plan for transferring knowledge from an aging, experienced workforce to the next generation of talented employees. We walk companies through the process. We make it very easy — painless, in fact.

In addition, eligible businesses can receive a South Carolina tax credit of \$1k (£588) per apprentice per year for up to four years.

As South Carolina works to grow its skilled workforce, enhance its competitiveness and increase the employability of its citizens, Apprenticeship Carolina is a program perfectly aligned with these goals — one that commands a closer look.

# ‘There are principles and ideas that we could do well to learn from’

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It's been a decade since John Healey presided over apprenticeship policy as the UK and Labour's first Adult Skills Minister, but as we sat in his office in the Norman Shaw South building which overlooks the Thames, it became clear he never took his finger off the pulse.

Mr Healey and I had both just returned from the world class apprenticeships study tour, run by the International Skills Standards Organisation (INSSO), of which he is a director.

He led the tour for the Washington DC and Canada legs, but had to return to London for important votes. As Apprenticeship Carolina's Brad Neese put it: "Not that: 'I've got to go back to the Queen' excuse again".

The MP for Wentworth and Dearn, in South Yorkshire, was appointed Adult Skills Minister by Tony Blair in 2001 and went on to preside over skills policy at the Treasury. He's proud of his party's record on apprenticeships, scathing of the current government's approach, but said all countries had a lot to learn from each other.

He said: "What strikes me is that there are a number of features in common, challenges in common. Nothing is simply transposable, but I think there are some principles and ideas that we could do well to learn from."

"What I liked about the Canadian system was the fact it set out to reinforce the status and stamp of approval in Canada of the apprenticeship training, the Red Seal, something that they uniquely, because of their 13 provinces, required to meet a national standard.

"There is an open question for us all beyond that — in a globalising world with more and more mobile labour, and with certain technical and professional disciplines, to what extent is there a case for transnational standards?"

"A Red Seal-style approval, not of all apprenticeships, but perhaps starting in certain areas where those sort of internationalised skills, internationalised labour and internationalised demand, are most evident. And this is something that INSSO is doing some very interesting work as something of a field leader."

But the Canadian system was, he said, inflexible, with very few trades represented in the Red Seal accreditation scheme.

"They are sticking to some very specific areas of work," he said, "and when they told us that they'd increased by two the specialist fields for apprenticeships the red seal system covered, actually they were subdivisions of existing categories of skills.

"They did not seem open to the developments of their system to reflect either new industries, as we have tried to do very effectively in Britain, say with the creative industries, or less traditional, non, if you like, blue-collar style technical skills, which apprenticeships in Canada still reflect, and which obviously our history in the UK reflects, but we have managed to move beyond."

In South Carolina's system, Mr Healey saw value in their focus on the employer as the first priority.

He said: "The design and delivery of the training is directed absolutely towards the employers' needs. And the buy-in from employers. So I think that's a good principle that we can look to reinforce in our own system."

"It's clear there are downsides in their system, which is, I think, that there have been question marks over the quality, question marks over, in particular, the variable experience of apprentices, and questions over the variable balance between the off-the-job and the on-the-job training.

"The other thing I liked about the South Carolina model was a very American-style priority on strong branding, strong marketing, and making people want to buy it with the belief that what they buy, they value."

But he admitted, as Secretary Perez did in Washington DC, that the Americans were still way behind Britain and many of other European states on apprenticeships. One reason for this was investment or, rather, the lack of it.

He said: "I was shocked and very struck when Bob Lerman talked about the mismatch in the States at federal level, across the US. They have put \$200bn (£176.6bn) a year into higher education colleges and universities, and it was something like \$2m (£1.1m) or \$5m (£2.9m) for apprenticeships — it was negligible."

"And really the challenge for Obama, the White House, Secretary Perez, is whether can they match, and can they get Congress to match, the aspiration with some resources in order to make it into a sought-after route for young people in the States."

"They are way behind us, and the research that I spoke about in my speech underlines that, despite the flakey figures that we've had over the last four years from government in the UK. Actually, it's a good question to ask ourselves, and to test."

He said his party's "rescue" of apprenticeships from "near death" in England in the 1997 Parliament had required a commitment to public subsidy, which had cross-party support.

He added: "For the very best of employers that have a well-established, well-developed

The design and delivery of the training is directed absolutely towards the employers' needs



Former Innovation, Universities and Skills Secretary John Healey and John Denham outside 10 Downing Street during Labour's time in office

apprenticeship system and see it as part and parcel of their staff development, their company capacity, in those cases, the employers are putting in a good deal of direct and indirect cost."

Mr Healey was less enthusiastic about the government's apprenticeship reforms, which could see all funding routed through employers, who will also be responsible for some of the cost of training and assessment for the first time.

"We're rushing into it," he said. "On the employer contribution, we risk creating an inflexible system with a cliff edge that could drive a lot of smaller businesses that perhaps have an apprentice now or might be considering it, just off the edge and away from the system. The second question is how do we direct the public, taxpayers' money, to support employers?"

"And all the signs are that the government wants to do it through the tax rule, the tax system. Now, frankly I think that we're likely to see an arrangement there that will be open to abuse, and I think it won't work to be the incentive required either — so I'm concerned about that."

"The third element, I think, is that I am critical of the headlong rush simply to put responsibility entirely in the hands of single companies, however big and however well-established they are."

"You want employers to be at the leading edge of specifying, designing and QA-ing some of the apprenticeships design, you want them to be at the forefront of being able to promote them with other employers, but if you put it in the hands of one company then I think you risk all sorts of problems — you risk them devising it for

## An extract of John Healey MP's speech to the Urban Institute

"I really admire Secretary Perez's ambition to double the number of apprenticeships here in the US over the next five years. It amplifies that ambition that President Obama set out in his State of the Union address. It recognises what is the central challenge to our labour markets in a continually globalising economy."

"It offers real hope for many young people who just don't feel that at the moment they can get a decent start to their own working lives. And I know too well that bipartisanship has become too rare in this town, but I do hope this initiative gets that all-party support it deserves in Congress and in the individual states."

"To colleagues in the US I say I am proud that in the UK there is a strong, bipartisan consensus behind sustained public investment in apprenticeships, and that crosses the political parties and is there between employers and trade unions as well. After all, skills bring shared gains, so they should be a shared responsibility."

"In the wider skills field, apprenticeship is the stand-out priority, but it is also the stand-out brand — with a remarkable resilience and potential reach both in your country and in mine. But I have to say we did legislate a little earlier than you for a national apprenticeship system. It was in 1563. Four hundred years later in the mid-1960s, still one third of all male school leavers in the UK went into an apprenticeship."

"By 1997 when the Labour government I served in came to office, apprenticeships had all but died out in the UK and only 65,000 started in that year. In government we gave great weight to supply-side reforms, raising school standards, rebuilding community colleges, expanding further and higher education, improving adult loans to basic skills but we also gave great weight to some of the demand-side changes needed as well. New sector skills councils, a national apprenticeship agency, and also trade union learning reps."

"When we left office in 2010, the number of apprentices starting that year had more than tripled to 300,000. However I am reminded of a warning that the independent Leech review we commissioned from the Treasury when I was there in 2006, gave on our skills programme: 'The scale of the challenge is daunting', and I think that assessment is even more telling now than it was then."

"People in both of our countries are struggling. Many feel left behind as their wages, their living standards, their opportunities are squeezed, and for many the belief the chances for their children will be better than their own, the American dream or the promise of Britain, seems now beyond reach."

"When record numbers of young people in the US and the UK are unemployed or under-employed, including many of them college graduates, then we need to find new ways to boost skilled jobs and growth in our countries, because this waste of talent, this waste of potential shames us all."



their own company purposes, not for the sector, for the employer, rather than for the employees' benefit."

Overall, it seems, Mr Healey is not at all happy with the way FE has been treated under the Coalition.

He says: "There is an abiding sense in FE, which is justified in many respects, that it doesn't have the level of understanding and attention that higher education and universities do, that schools always command more public and political attention than FE."

"One of the things I found about skills, having got the job in 2001, is that actually,

once you're in the sector and you're exposed to the policy, even if you move on you never leave skills behind."

"I'm glad to see that [former Skills Minister] John Hayes first maintained a cross-party consensus behind apprenticeships, and the rhetoric of the importance of skills, but some of the funding decisions they've taken have knocked the legs from under the system."

"The Education Maintenance Allowance cut was a disastrous decision for many young people — FE has become the field of easy, less visible cuts."

# Contrasting visions of apprenticeship reform — an overview by Tom Bewick, INSSO chief executive

The 49th parallel between Canada and the United States is reputedly the world's longest undefended border.

As mostly peaceful neighbours in trade and cultural exchange for centuries, ideas and people can move freely.

Yet these two vast countries — geographically and geo-politically speaking — are not necessarily convergent when it comes to their individual apprenticeship reforms.

In Washington DC, the overarching narrative our study tour encountered was one of America wrestling with its place in the world following the global financial crash.

The Great Recession has led to worries about the Great Stagnation and whether the powerhouse US economy has still got what it takes to deliver the American Dream.

Policymakers fret about anaemic job numbers and poor labour productivity. Meanwhile, student debt has surpassed all other forms of consumer debt at \$1tn (£589bn).

And despite the optimism in states like South Carolina, apprenticeship volumes are actually falling in other parts of the country.

The main challenge, of course, is what to do about it. Affordable college education and encouraging entrepreneurship will remain the staple ambition, but at least American leaders have correctly identified a troubling phenomenon — the chasm now opening up between the “pay and prey” approach to post-secondary education and the “learn and earn” model that might help get the

world's largest economy back on track.

Pay and prey refers to four-year college degrees. Learn and earn is apprenticeship. Like drifting continental tectonic plates, could the competing worlds of the knowledge economy and the know-how economy at last be joining up?

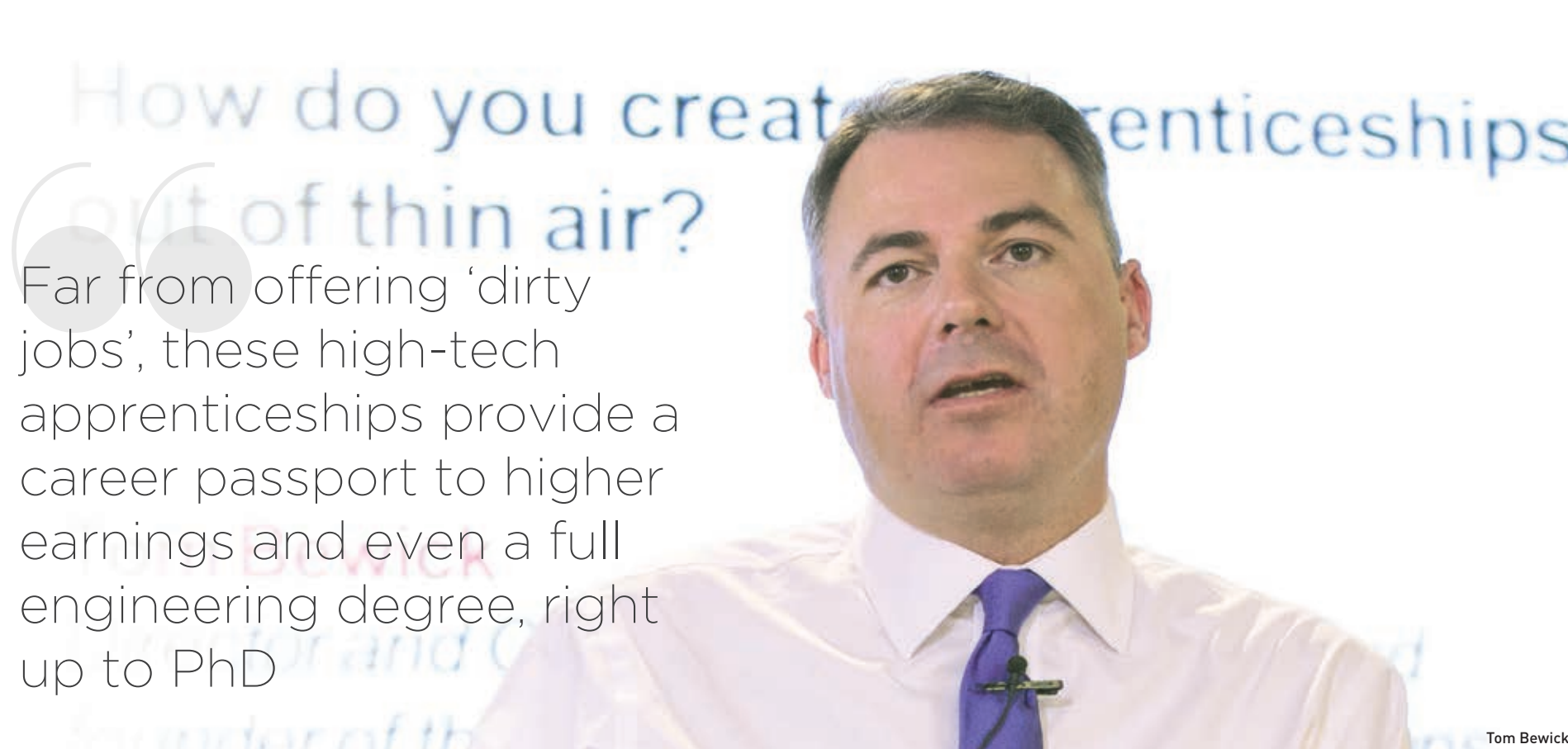
Apprenticeships can help deliver, in the words of US Labour Secretary Thomas Perez, “a ticket to the middle classes”. It is an expansive vision backed up by potentially \$2bn (£1.17bn) of federal monies to double the number of apprentices over the next five years. The obstacle will be working out how best to spend the increased investment without it simply resulting in ‘more of the same’.

A federal, top-down programme is unlikely to work, without the active buy-in of the individual states. To achieve that, the federal government will need to tie increased funding to the achievement of real world outcomes such as, for example, better formal registration and completion rates.

They will also need to foster innovative delivery models, as well as an approach to training quality that ensures qualified apprentices can move easily from one occupation to the next. Comparable competency standards tied to what Americans call “stackable credentials” will be the key.

But without employers — lots of them — you can't have apprenticeships.

The low-hanging fruit will be found in persuading some of the country's advanced manufacturers and high-tech companies



Far from offering ‘dirty jobs’, these high-tech apprenticeships provide a career passport to higher earnings and even a full engineering degree, right up to PhD

Tom Bewick

to wean themselves away from cheap graduate internships to hiring into formal apprenticeship routes, offering quality two-year associate degrees. The implications of such a reform is nothing short of turning the whole system on its head. Community technical colleges — for years located on the periphery of the US post-compulsory

education system — could be about to take centre-stage.

The study tour's visit to BMW's only production plant in the US provided a glimpse of what this uniquely, future American model might look like. The head of workforce development, Werner Eikenbusch (himself the product of the

Germanic dual apprenticeship model), was emphatic that such an approach would not work in a non-unionised state like South Carolina.

Instead, the company has taken the key principles of the dual system — essentially its emphasis on high quality on-the-job and off-the-job technical training — and adopted

it to American circumstances.

For starters, the scheme is called BMW Scholarships, a direct reference to the prized scholarships coveted by those attending the Ivy League universities.

Competition for places is fierce and both parents and ‘associates’ (the term refers to all BMW workers) are left in no doubt that

this is a viable way of becoming a graduate without all the associated debt.

Far from offering ‘dirty jobs’, these high-tech apprenticeships provide a career passport to higher earnings and even a full engineering degree, right up to PhD.

Mr Eikenbusch says that South Carolina's technical college system is pivotal to the scheme's success, since they have designed a virtually bespoke curriculum to meet all the company's needs. I asked him why his apprentices were not registered with the US Department of Labour.

The direct answer was his company's adverse reaction to unnecessary red tape including the potential involvement of the US Labour Department in apprentices' disciplinary hearings. Secretary Perez will need to get a grip of issues like this if his expansive plans are to be realised. A recognised system of competency skills standards remains another major challenge.

In contrast, Canada is taking a different path. Don't expect to see a highly-bespoke, employer responsive apprenticeship system north of the 49th parallel any time soon. That's because the whole orientation of Canadian apprenticeships is towards the ‘skilled trades’.

These skilled trades, from cooks to carpenters, form part of the 55 recognised Red Seal occupations. The emphasis, since the 1950s, has been to ensure the mobility of these trades across Canada's 13 provinces and territories. Indeed, the Interprovincial

Standard — the Red Seal — is what drives the whole apprenticeship system.

Indeed, there was a general look of bemusement when one of our study tour participants tried to suggest that apprenticeships could be applied in the non-skilled trades, like accountancy and law.

Canadian Skills Standards are developed in a top-down, bottom-up, sort of fashion, with the federal government department mainly in charge of the process.

For close followers of the Trailblazers in England, there's a clear parallel with the Canadian approach. In England, all the talk is of asking employers or tradespeople to write the standards. But in reality it is central government officials who call most of the shots. They hold the budgets and it is they who decide which companies are commissioned to do the work.

For me, personally, one of the biggest takeaways from the study tour was the issue of reconciling the tension of traditional apprenticeships systems — like in the case of Canada — with the American system of letting a thousand flowers bloom.

Neither model can claim, as yet, to be offering universal world-class apprenticeships on a par with the best in the world. The counterweight of the four-year bachelor degree brand across North America is probably too powerful.

But, equally, there is a strong appetite for reform and doing things differently. Whether it will lead to the kind of economic progress epitomised by the invisible barrier of the 49th parallel is yet to be seen.



## More than just a brand

It's been a time of apprenticeship review in Northern Ireland, but further lessons have been taken away from the study tour of the US and Canada, says Yvonne Croskery.

The model of apprenticeships in operation in Northern Ireland (NI) — ApprenticeshipsNI — has served us well, with more than 46,929 undertaking an apprenticeship since its launch in 2007.

However, the types of economic activity businesses engage in and the goods and services produced are changing rapidly.

We must invest in higher level skills to meet these needs. There is also the sense that apprenticeships have lost some of the

status they once held, with other pathways of education and training held in greater esteem.

The NI Employment and Learning Minister, Dr Stephen Farry, launched a review of apprenticeships to make sure that apprenticeships align more closely with the needs of our economy and to re-invigorate the apprenticeship pathway so that it is regarded in equal esteem to academic routes.

Fundamentally, the review establishes apprenticeships as a system of employment and learning, rather than a brand, that can be applied to a much wider range of occupations by identifying core components that set a clear benchmark for a quality 21st Century apprenticeship system.

Our new model puts employers in the driving seat, but also meets wider needs through establishing an advisory forum at government level, alongside sectoral partnership groups.

A central service will promote and

Our new model puts employers in the driving seat, but also meets wider needs through establishing an advisory forum at government level

incentivise apprenticeships, particularly small and micro businesses that can be the most challenging to support, but are the heart of our economy.

Apprenticeships will commence at level three upwards, with a substantial outcome that offers progression into further and

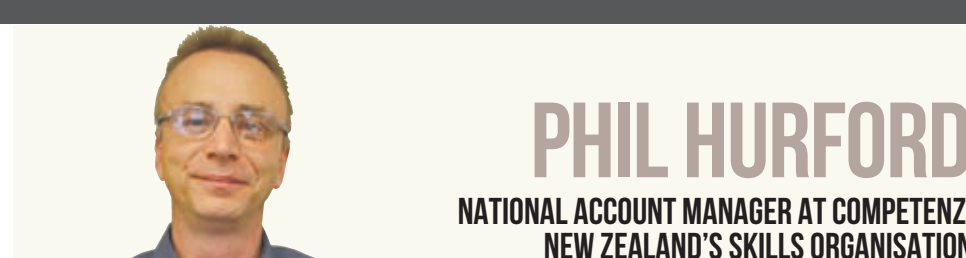
higher education and mobility across the wider economy.

The study tour provided me the chance to see at first hand elements of international best practice.

In Apprenticeships Carolina, we were presented with a seamless central service concept, bringing together employers, schools, careers centres and the college experts, ensuring an apprenticeship offering which fully meets employers' needs, while at the same time effectively marketing apprenticeships to young people.

During our visit to Canada we were presented with a robust model for securing standards and end assessment, through their Red Seal program. These two areas were particularly informative, as we move toward the implementation of our new apprenticeship model.

All in all, a very informative and enjoyable study which provided much food for thought as well as providing a number of invaluable policy contacts from across the world — we have certainly much to learn from each other and best practice to share.



## Is there too much flexibility in US apprenticeships?

Despite vast differences in the scale of geography and population, New Zealand can learn much from US apprenticeships — not least the benefits of flexibility in its own system, explains Phil Hurford.

The recent study tour to the United States and Canada confirmed for me the renewed commitment we are seeing in many countries for apprenticeships, while highlighting the different approaches taken to training apprentices across the world.

There is certainly agreement on the fundamentals for apprenticeships (training

while in employment, graduated pay scale, off-job theory and on-job practical) but there are also some striking differences in how countries define apprenticeships and train and assess their future tradesmen.

One of the most noticeable differences between the US and New Zealand is that apprentices in the US usually undertake a specifically-tailored training programme for the benefit of an individual organisation, with considerable flexibility in what constitutes an apprenticeship.

The approach no doubt meets the needs of each organisation, but results in certifications that often are not widely

recognised or transferable, even within each state.

All New Zealand apprenticeships lead to nationally-recognised qualifications and are supported by a clearly defined training plan and standards.

There is a long tradition of apprenticeships in New Zealand with strong industry support for apprentices trained to have highly transferable skills and qualifications.

With the full backing of industry we effectively train apprentices for the greater good of the industry and the country rather than just to meet the needs of an individual organisation.

The difference in approach has no doubt developed due to the massive difference in scale between the US and New Zealand.

With a population of just under 4.5m, New Zealand is smaller than most states and at February 2013 there were only 2,120 organisations employing more than 100 staff.

In America in 2011 there were almost 100,000 organisations employing more than 100 staff with more than 17,000 of those employing in excess of 500.

National qualifications allow us to combine apprentices from small businesses across the country for standard off-job training courses and results in trade certification that is highly valued by apprentices and their employers.

To ensure national standards are adhered to during on-job training and to provide external coaching and mentoring of apprentices the New Zealand government, through the Tertiary Education Commission states that the Industry Training Organisation must visit all apprentices a minimum of four times a-year.

We consider this to be essential in maintaining standards and completion rates, which are currently sitting around 85 per cent across our four-year mechanical engineering apprentices.

Apprenticeships play a crucial role in the development and competitiveness of all industrialised countries so it is exciting to see a renewed interest in this traditional form of training from all countries represented on the recent study tour.



# A FRESH APPROACH TO SECURING ENGLISH AND MATHS SKILLS



Cambridge Progression in English and maths is an ideal way to fill your learners' skill gaps and help to encourage them to progress to Functional Skills or GCSEs.

You can use Cambridge Progression units to support learners who haven't received a GCSE A-C grade – we've certainly seen centres doing this. You can deliver these units within the GCSE learning programme and equip learners with the specific English or maths skills they've been missing. The learners will also be certificated with a motivational Award in Cambridge Progression in their GCSE programme.

Our approach means that your learners can focus on achieving their aims and progressing with confidence and they also have funding available.

## How can you access this funding?

For 16- to 19-year-olds, Cambridge Progression English and maths qualifications can be used as part of a study programme. In order to meet the funding condition, learners must be registered on a programme containing GCSE or Functional Skills English and maths. Learners 19+ who've yet to achieve Level 2 English and maths can get funding for their Cambridge Progression qualifications as they appear in the list of approved learning aims.

They can be used to support progression to GCSE or Functional Skills qualifications or as stand-alone units. In all cases you'll need to produce an Initial and Diagnostic Assessment as an auditing document to identify the underpinning skills that the learner needs in order to progress to Level 2 qualifications. This is where we can help.

## High-quality assessment tools as standard!

We provide a free diagnostic assessment tool that measures progress from a learner's starting point. Our approach means that your learners can focus on achieving their aims and progressing with confidence to their next learning aim. Cambridge Progression qualifications in English and maths are an ideal way to fill your learners' skills gaps to help encourage them to progress to Functional Skills or GCSEs. They enable you to accommodate the specific needs of your learners with bite-sized units of between one and four credits and can be used innovatively as they focus on short, targeted learning.

For more information see  
[ocr.org.uk/cambridgeprogression](http://ocr.org.uk/cambridgeprogression)

