

**Update for the HE Employer Trailblazer consortium from Co-convenors Professor Jane Longmore and Sarah Tudor: March 2017**

We are pleased to update all consortium members with the latest developments regarding our Trailblazer. As you will be aware, much hard work is under way on the standards and we are grateful to the Steering Group, the Working Groups and the sub-groups drawn from HEIs across the sector. The consortium now includes 102 HEIs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 3 Further Education Colleges and 18 supporting organisations. We continue to stress our intention to be as inclusive as possible and to ensure that all the standards under development meet the needs of the sector.

- **Academic Professional Apprenticeship Standard**: following the standard's submission on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017, we have now received official feedback from the DfE. The Department has made a set of recommendations which are to be met in order for the standard to be approved. Our DfE Relationship Manager has assured us that all recommendations are achievable and that there is a firm prospect of securing approval for this standard. Sean Mackney, chair of the Academic Professional working group, will discuss the recommendations with our Relationship Manager and make the appropriate amendments prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> March submission deadline. These minor amendments will be made in alignment with the HEA, Vitae and SEDA and will be approved by the Co-convenors on behalf of the Steering Committee of the HE Employer Trailblazer. Due to time constraints, we will not be able to circulate the revised version of the standard prior to its submission but will do so soon after. The Assessment Plan will be submitted for the April deadline. We are still on track to complete the approval process in good time for institutions who wish to draw down their levy funds for the PGCert/MA registration of their September intake of Academic Professionals.
- **HE Professional Apprenticeship Standard**: following the re-submission of the expression of interest on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, the DfE has provided us with feedback that they require further evidence on the distinctiveness of the occupations (University Administrator, Research Manager and Knowledge Exchange Professional) that the standard aims to cover and the uniqueness of the HE sector. We remain convinced that we can provide evidence on both counts and that we should resist pressure to adopt a generic standard, such as the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship. The Co-convenors of the HE Employer Trailblazer, along with a sub-group of the HE Professional working group have therefore been working on compiling additional material to support the resubmission. Further guidance is being provided by our DfE relationship manager and by AHUA, AUA, ARMA and AURIL. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the institutions that have provided us with letters of support from senior staff for the development of this standard. It is government policy for apprenticeship standards to be 'employer-driven' so this expression of strong employer support will make a significant difference to the re-submission of the expression of interest on the 27<sup>th</sup> April

2017. Should you be interested in acquiring further guidance on the letters of support or confirming whether your institution has already submitted one, please do not hesitate to contact our consortium co-ordinator, Gilmar.Queiros@universitiesuk.ac.uk.

- **Technician Apprenticeship Standard**: We are currently collaborating with the University of Sheffield and other HEIs on the development of a potential lower-level Technician Apprenticeship Standard. Any HEI interested in joining the working group developing this standard please contact Gilmar Queiros, as above. Please note that working groups have a limited amount of space purely on the grounds of operational manageability and members should be committed to dedicating appropriate time to the working group. We will keep the wider consortium informed of developments in our next update.
- **Level 8 Apprenticeship Standard**: We are pleased to announce that the HE Employer Trailblazer is also developing a cross-sector “Level 8 Professional Practice Researcher Integrated Degree Apprenticeship”. The recognised HE qualification within this standard is likely to be the professional doctorate. We are at very early stages in these discussions but will be circulating further information as soon as possible.

We hope that this update is useful for members of the consortium. We will continue to keep you informed about these developments and intend to circulate another update in late April.

Please note that for any HEI requiring assistance with an application to join the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), UVAC is offering a webinar on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 9.30am. HEIs who wish to deliver any of the above standards must be on this register. The current window for applications is open until 7<sup>th</sup> April.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Gilmar Queiros at UniversitiesUK. T: +44 (0)20 7419 5431 | E: Gilmar.Queiros@universitiesuk.ac.uk

Kind regards,

Professor Jane Longmore and Sarah Tudor, Co-convenors.