

What universities should look for in an end-to-end apprenticeship technology solution

A guide for universities



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The number of higher and degree apprenticeships offered by universities has seen a large expansion since their introduction by the government in 2015 to address higher skills shortages in England. This change has brought about a unique challenge for universities: enrolling high volumes of new learners, with specific compliance requirements.

The core challenges for universities in delivering apprenticeships lie in onboarding, compliance administration to meet Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and OFSTED requirements and rules, internal and external reporting, and the management of data to evidence progression and completion. It is understandable that making the major change to a new technology provider comes with questions and uncertainty. Here, we discuss the factors that universities should look for in an end-to-end apprenticeship technology solution.

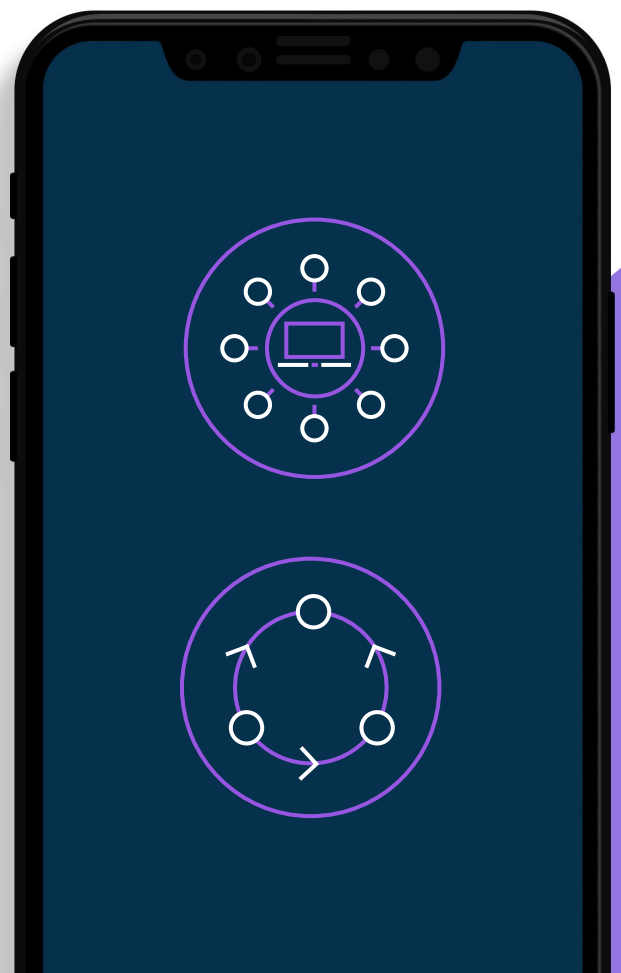
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Multiple systems and APIs

Universities often try to manage different parts of the apprentice lifecycle, from application and onboarding through to end-point assessment, using multiple systems. Managing these separately can be difficult and confusing and does not help universities to validate information that the EFSA and OFSTED require. Issues often arise when trying to maintain consistency with university and HESA reporting. Overall the process is time consuming and prone to errors. End-to-end technology solutions allow multiple systems to communicate with existing university systems such as the Student Record System using APIs, creating a platform for universities to manage these processes consistently. This avoids any data discrepancies, and managing data is streamlined, saving universities valuable time and effort.

“One of the biggest pluses of Aptem was the fact that we could use it to do all of our submissions. Aptem has now proven to be our one central place, our digital bible if you like.”

Steve Willis, CAS Operations
Manager, Middlesex University



Individualised Learner Records (ILRs)

ILRs are a crucial piece of data that will determine whether the university will receive funding. Existing systems such as the student record system are not well equipped to meet ILR requirements, especially with a large and increasing volume of apprentices. Additional processes and systems needed to meet the standards set by ESFA can be time consuming and complex. An end-to-end solution vendor ensures that these processes are in place, streamlined to eliminate time-consuming repetition, and reduces the likelihood of errors.

Compliance documents and evidence

This is a vital part of apprenticeship delivery, from required paperwork collection of Off-the-Job (OTJ) hours, to tripartite reviews. Many universities use peripheral software, spreadsheets, PDFs, or hard copy to collect and sign off their OTJ hours, compliance documentation such as Apprentice agreements and Commitment Statements and regular tripartite and other reviews. Having a system that can collect this data automatically and digitally, greatly simplifies the process, reducing chances of error, providing evidence for external scrutiny, and cutting admin time and costs.

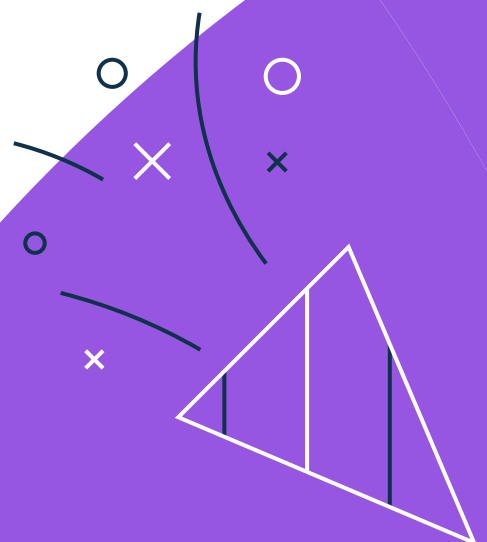
“Aptem is brilliant – plug in and go – and we were up and running immediately with our ILR submissions. Now our ILRs are completed in a matter of seconds.”

Ian Maude, Head of Apprenticeships, Leeds Beckett University

Managing degree apprenticeship programmes successfully

The delivery of a degree apprenticeship programme adds complexity to the delivery of an equivalent non-apprentice degree programme. Both OFSTED and the ESFA require each programme not only to deliver any required or mandated qualifications, but also to deliver and show progress and achievement against the knowledge, skills, behaviours (KSBs) and EPA outcomes of the related apprenticeship standard. Student record systems, virtual learning environments and portfolio systems, while able to deliver assessment, blended or digital learning and portfolio development, are not structured to evidence and map effectively to the KSBs and outcomes as they are required to be evidenced according to the standards. Through an apprenticeship management system such as Aptem, universities are able to structure the apprenticeship delivery via a learning plan to

incorporate degree progression and outcomes, portfolio creation and mapping, and also hours and delivery milestones. By progressively using these features in Aptem, or by selectively integrating or linking learning, progression and evidence is collected in existing university systems. This enables universities to articulate, manage and evidence their degree apprenticeships in one place, while maintaining integrity and quality with other core systems used across the university. This will serve to reduce the cost and manual interventions needed to articulate apprentice delivery in a compliant way.



Reduce apprenticeship delivery costs by up to 15%

Cost will always be a consideration when looking to implement an end-to-end technology solution. While it may seem daunting to invest money in a new system, this new end-to-end technology solution will combine all of the systems that would have been used in the past, resulting in a significant cost saving. Streamlining the number of vendors used to deliver training not only saves money, but also time. An end-to-end solution vendor should not just be a software house but instead a panel of subject matter experts, offering what is currently needed by the university, as well as looking ahead to what will be required in the future. The [Aptem Delivery Savings Calculator](#) demonstrates how much universities can save.



In conclusion, end-to-end apprentice technology solutions allow universities delivering apprenticeship programmes to create and manage the learner journey, documentation, reviews, progress and reporting, all in one place. Aptem complements existing university systems through integration where needed, and reduces use of some peripheral systems.

As apprenticeships continue to grow nationally, universities need to look at new ways to manage apprenticeship delivery at scale to capitalise on the growing market for higher-level skills. A high-quality, end-to-end technology solution can provide the platform to manage apprenticeships in an efficient, digital and compliant environment, while lowering administrative burden and costs.

“This flexible system saves us considerable time and effort, and delivers a high level of insight.”

Ruth Eccles, Head of Professional and Workplace Learning,
University of Nottingham

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