

Automotive Modern Apprenticeship review.

**A report on the review of off-the-job training in
Automotive Modern Apprenticeships by
Education Scotland**

July 2017

Contents

Context	Page 3
Grades	Page 4
Outcomes and impact	Page 6
Delivery of training	Page 11
Leadership and quality	Page 15
Capacity to improve	Page 17
Recommendations	Page 18
Appendix 1 – External review methodology	Page 19
Appendix 2 – Grade exemplifications	Page 20

Context

Education Scotland has been commissioned by the Scottish Government to undertake external reviews of the off-the-job, and from June 2017, on-the-job training elements of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programmes within each of the industry sectors over the coming years.

The strategic vision outlined by the Scottish Government in *Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy* (YES)¹ is for a post-16 education and training sector in which:

- all provision, regardless of provider, is focused on providing young people with the skills, knowledge and attributes necessary to support Scotland's economic growth and maximise their life chances;
- all providers and their key stakeholders work together regionally and nationally to ensure high quality provision that meets the needs of learners and employers; and
- the relevance and quality of this provision, the extent to which it supports economic growth and post-16 reform, and the outcomes learners achieve are evaluated through an appropriate blend of self-evaluation, external scrutiny and public reporting through a national quality assurance and quality improvement system.

The modern retail motor industry sector operates at the forefront of transportation technology and is constantly undergoing significant change to ensure that car manufacturers keep ahead of the technology curve and new developments. For apprenticeships in this sector, the significance of this cannot be over emphasised. For example, the increasing volumes of hybrid and electric vehicles being introduced to the market, combined with legislative requirements around vehicle emissions and ever more complex electronic and software control systems, are demanding that apprentices gain new skills and the ability to keep pace with these advances.

In Scotland the Automotive retail sector employs approximately 48,500 people, which accounts for 2% of the total Scottish workforce, and 9% of the total UK Automotive retail workforce. The number of employees has remained relatively constant for the last 10 years. There are approximately 4,315 automotive retail enterprises operating across Scotland, which equates to 3% of all Scottish businesses, across all sectors, ranging from small rural garages to large multi-franchised dealer groups. The Automotive Retail sector is a significant contributor to the Scottish economy, contributing, in 2010, £1.3 billion, which is 6% of the total Scottish Gross Value Added (GVA) figure. In comparison, the UK Automotive Retail Sector contributed 3% GVA to the UK economy. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has identified the Automotive industry as having national economic importance and a number of funded MAs are offered within the sector.²

SDS statistics, prepared in 2016 for this review, states that the number of starts in Automotive MAs had increased from 1051 in 2013/14 to 1203 in 2015/16.³ The numbers in training during the same period were 2612 in 2013/14 and 3209 in 2015/16. The overall achievement rate⁴ for automotive apprentices during this period had dropped from 67% to 59%, but was showing a healthier improvement to 73% by the time the review commenced in 2016. However, the latest SDS published statistics for 2016/17 reveal that the achievement rate for Automotive is 68%, which is 10 percentage points lower than the overall MA programme achievement rate of 78% across all of the frameworks.

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/News/Releases/2012/01/Employment>

² <http://www.theimi.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/473035.pdf>

³ SDS Information to support the Automotive MA Review, 29 August 2016.

⁴ Achievement rate is calculated as a percentage based upon the total number of leavers divided by the total number of achievers in the measurement period

Grades

The overall grades for each of the questions from the quality indicators, summarised from the centres visited, are shown below:

<u>Outcomes and impact</u>		<u>Service delivery</u>		<u>Leadership and Quality Culture</u>
How well are apprentices progressing and achieving relevant high quality outcomes?	How well do we meet the needs of our apprentices and stakeholders?	How good is our delivery of training?	How good is our management of training delivery?	How good is our strategic leadership?
very good	very good	very good	very good	very good

A grade of **Very Good** describes an evaluation of training characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement in this evaluation, and any that do exist, do not significantly diminish apprentices' experiences. While an evaluation of **Very Good** represents a high standard of training, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to provide training without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the contracted provider will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to **Excellent**.

For this review of automotive MAs, Education Scotland evaluated the provision of the providers' off-the-job training in the following centres between September 2016 and January 2017:

Ayrshire College	Dundee and Angus College	Edinburgh College
GTG Training	In Training – Babcock Training at VW Group and Calex at Jaguar Land Rover	LAGTA Bosch Group Training
Moray Training Group	New College Lanarkshire	Skillnet

The table on the next page shows the spread of the grades for each quality indicator in the 10 providers, Education Scotland visited for this report.

Centre number	Outcome and Impact		Delivery of Training		Leadership and Quality Culture
	How well are apprentices progressing and achieving relevant high quality outcomes?	How well do we meet the needs of our apprentices and stakeholders?	How good is our delivery of training?	How good is our management of training delivery?	How good is our strategic leadership?
Centre 1	vg	g	g	g	s
Centre 2	g	vg	g	vg	vg
Centre 3	e	e	e	e	e
Centre 4	vg	vg	vg	vg	g
Centre 5	g	vg	vg	vg	g
Centre 6	vg	vg	e	e	e
Centre 7	g	vg	vg	vg	vg
Centre 8	vg	vg	vg	g	g
Centre 9	vg	vg	e	e	vg
Centre 10	vg	e	vg	e	vg
OVERALL	vg	vg	vg	vg	vg

e =	excellent
vg =	very good
g =	good
s =	satisfactory
w =	weak
us =	unsatisfactory

Outcomes and impact

How well are apprentices progressing and achieving relevant high-quality outcomes?

GRADE – very good.

How effective is the centre at achieving and maintaining high levels of service delivery?

Areas of positive practice

- Achievement rates in the majority of centres visited for the automotive engineering MA programme are in line with the national average for the sector, and a few centres perform above the average.
- A few centres fast-track apprentices who are progressing well onto higher level programmes, identifying their potential early and providing apprentices with high levels of support from staff. This approach offers an added incentive for apprentices to do well in their programme and develop higher level skills.
- In almost all centres, retention rates of apprentices in training are high. Most apprentices are clear on what their goals are, can identify their advancement in achieving their goals and are making good progress towards completing their qualification.
- In a few centres, concerted efforts to attract more female apprentices are beginning to demonstrate good progress. These initiatives have been designed to take positive action in relation to gender during their recruitment processes and staff monitor and review progress carefully.
- Most apprentices are developing their core skills well.

Areas for development

- Achievement rates for the majority of centres delivering the automotive apprenticeship programme, are lower than the Scottish average for all apprenticeship programmes.
- In three of the colleges visited, the automotive MA achievement rates are lower than the Scottish average for automotive programmes over the last three years. There are reasons for this, for example, the delay by college staff in processing completed portfolios and insufficient tracking of core skills achievement of apprentices, have contributed to these lower rates of achievement.
- Almost all centres are unsuccessful in attracting more female apprentices onto automotive programmes.

Creativity, Innovation and Impact

Developing Scotland's Young Automotive Workforce - Partnership between LAGTA Bosch and North Lanarkshire Education Authority.

LAGTA Bosch has built a partnership with North Lanarkshire Education Department as part of the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce strategy, to deliver a certificated automotive programme to introduce school pupils to opportunities in the motor trade in a practical way.

During the academic year 2015 to 2016, a programme for young people in schools was delivered to senior pupils from five additional support needs schools and six mainstream secondary schools. These young people had the opportunity to gain a City and Guilds Level

one certificate which 39 pupils achieved, or a Bosch certificate of attendance, which 24 young people achieved. An additional 28 young people achieved a number of relevant units.

This initiative encouraged 13 young people, from a number of these schools, to progress onto the MA programme at LAGTA, including two pupils with additional support needs. This partnership is expected to generate more interest from young people as the initiative evolves over time.

In addition to the programme for senior pupils, LAGTA also delivered a successful short taster programme to five Primary 5 and 6 pupils from a local primary school in 2016. The centre plans to offer this programme again in academic year 2016-17, conditional on inclusion of at least one female pupil.

These programmes effectively raised awareness of young people of the opportunities available in the automotive industry and potentially could contribute to improving the gender balance within the MA programme.

How well do centres adhere to statutory principles and guidance?

Areas of positive practice

- In all centres, health and safety arrangements are well-considered and implemented effectively by staff. Staff regularly reinforce the relevance of health and safety practices with apprentices and are proactive in ensuring apprentices understand the importance of having a safe place to work and train.
- All centres undertake risk assessments, including safeguarding and anti-bullying initiatives, to ensure apprentices have a safe and effective learning environment.
- All centres provide a strategic focus on equality and diversity initiatives to attract learners from all sectors of society.
- Opportunities for more female apprentices are delivered through a range of equality and diversity strategies in most centres. These include initiatives such as *Driven Women*, *This Ayrshire Girl Can*, using Facebook and social media to present opportunities such as the Girls Aloud website and The Starting Grid employability fund programme.

Area for development

- In a few centres, the ambitions and strategies for recruiting a more diverse cohort of apprentices have yet to be implemented fully and are not always understood by all staff.

Creativity, Innovation and Impact

Babcock Training, Driven Women Campaign

The Automotive industry is predominately considered to be male dominated. Babcock Training delivers apprenticeship training for the Volkswagen Group which is seeking to improve the gender balance of their workforce to match their customer base and strategic ambitions. The senior managers at Volkswagen Group insist that this approach starts with the recruitment of higher numbers of female apprentices.

The staff at Babcock Training, working with the marketing department of the Volkswagen group, developed the *Driven Women* marketing campaign to attract more female applicants to

the MA automotive programme and to promote the benefits of a gender balanced workforce throughout the organisation.

The *Driven Women* campaign is communicated over a number of platforms both internally and externally. Staff share positive stories from women who are already successful in the industry and they have developed videos, brochures and flyers which are shared at careers events, through social media platforms and through internal communications network. Managers have introduced a dedicated female liaison officer to acts as a point of contact for female apprentices and have adapted programme scheduling so that there is more than one female on each learning or programme activity.

Following this initiative, Babcock Training has increased the number of female applicants for the MA automotive programme. At the recent Institute of Motor Industry (IMI) Outstanding achiever awards, one of the centre's female apprentices was successful in reaching the final shortlist.

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

GRADE – very good.

How well are apprentices progressing and achieving relevant high-quality outcomes

Areas of positive practice

- The off-the-job training programmes offered by most centres go beyond the minimum requirements and are tailored to meet the bespoke needs of employers. For example, offering training at times when employer workload is lower or focusing training on employer service contracts for police and military vehicles.
- In almost all cases, apprentices are very positive about their training experience and value highly the support they receive from staff delivering the training and assisting their wider needs.
- Most apprentices are able to communicate their views to staff about their training experiences through one-to-one meetings and progress reporting. Their comments and thoughts are also shared with their employers, whose views are also routinely sought by training staff.
- In those programmes which require apprentices to live away from home during their training, staff look after the apprentices well, ensure safeguarding procedures are in place and that they settle quickly into their accommodation. These apprentices develop their confidence and independence well through this experience.
- In almost all centres, apprentices are able to use the knowledge they gain and the skills they develop during their training, back in their workplace. This is negotiated between the centre and employers and is key element in ensuring the training in the centre transfers well into the workplace.
- A few centres enter their apprentices in national competitions and have a high success rate. For example two centres have been successful in their apprentices gaining 'Apprentice of the Year'.

Area for development

- In most centres, while almost all employers and apprentices are satisfied with the training programme, apprentices and employers do not have the opportunity to influence the delivery or the evaluation of the training programme.

How well does training meet the needs of apprentices and employers?

Areas of positive practice

- In almost all cases, the automotive MA programme is aligned well with employer requirements and the employment opportunities available to the apprentices upon completion of their training programme.
- In all centres, staff work effectively with awarding bodies and the IMI sector skills councils, to ensure the training meets the demands of the automotive industry, employers and apprentices. For example, employers can offer access to specialist resources through a partnership approach to training with the centre where equipment is highly specialised or very expensive.
- In many cases, centres engage effectively with local authorities and schools to generate interest in employment in the automotive industry. For example, one centre delivers training for pre-apprenticeship young learners as part of the authority's Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) strategy, another centre has installed automotive equipment within a few

schools in an authority area to deliver relevant initial training for young people interested in taking up an automotive career.

Area for development

- For a few centres, the arrangements to gain feedback from employers on the progress of their apprentices or the content of the training programme are insufficient.

Creativity, Innovation and Impact

The journey from work experience to apprenticeship – Arnold Clark

Arnold Clark delivers *The Work Experience* placement programme in all branches, across all of their MA frameworks throughout the year, to every school in Scotland.

In 2015, there were 219 completed placements. After each placement a feedback form is completed by the manager of the branch and the recruitment team then visit the school to meet the young people to gain their feedback on their placement and discuss their career aspirations.

If a young person is interested in an apprenticeship, the process on how and when to apply and the testing and interview arrangements are discussed with them. At this time, a gift of a Glasgow Training Group sports bag and water bottle is given to the young person, along with a certificate for completing their work experience.

When the young person applies for the apprenticeship programme, the recruitment team link with the work experience staff and ensure they, and the hiring manager, have the information available to deliver the full picture on the young person when considering them for employment.

Arnold Clark sees the whole process as a journey for the young person from the start of the work experience placement into the apprenticeship. In this way the company prepares the young person well for employment.

Delivery of training

How good is our delivery of training?

GRADE – very good

How well does the design and delivery of training meet the needs of apprentices and employers?

Areas of positive practice

- All apprentices are motivated by their programme experience and engage well in their technical training, practical tasks and additional elements of their programme. They work well in team tasks and in individual assessments, developing high levels of skills and have a very positive approach to their training programme.
- All centres offer a wide range of automotive programmes which provide good access to higher levels programmes. A few centres also offer entry level and pre-entry taster type programmes, which prepare apprentices well for the demands of the industry before they decide to become apprentices.
- In almost all centres, attendance options are negotiated with employers and meet the needs of employers and apprentices well.
- In all centres, relationships between staff and apprentices are constructive and positive, establishing high expectations on the standards of behaviour of apprentices and the quality of work that apprentices engage in.
- Staff plan activities well to accommodate employer and apprentice requirements and to ensure that learning is active and results in good progress for apprentices in achieving standards and competencies.
- Centres support apprentices well through the identification of their additional support needs. They plan the introduction and monitoring of specialised support effectively to ensure apprentices progress well in their programme. Examples include additional one-to-one coaching, additional learning aids for apprentices with dyslexia and bespoke attendance patterns and assessment arrangements.
- Most centres have industry standard equipment and learning environments. In some centres, the training environment is of a very high standard, utilising state of the art resources. In other centres, the use of information technology and virtual learning environments (VLE), such as the IMI ePortfolio, are used well to help apprentices gain easy access to learning resources, and to store their assessments to demonstrate their skills development.

Area for development

- In three centres, the equipment and tools are out-of-date and do not reflect current industry standards. The apprentices are at a disadvantage as the equipment does not provide them with sufficient opportunities to experience the use of modern technology and develop their skills in using it.

How well is training delivered?

Areas of positive practice

- Staff are well-experienced and have good industry and technical knowledge and experience which helps them to plan their theory and practical sessions effectively. The planning processes which many staff adopt, allows for the integration of theory with work-based activities. This enhances the learning experience and reinforces the motivation levels of the apprentices.
- Almost all teaching staff use a good variety of teaching approaches which encourages apprentices to work independently or in teams, and which builds the apprentices' confidence along with their practical skills.
- In most teaching sessions, staff encourage apprentices to share their workplace experience in the discussions in class or in workshops. This use of the apprentices' experiences as a learning resource is helpful in contextualising their training, making it highly relevant.
- Most staff use Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) resources and well-developed study guides effectively, to underpin their delivery and to support apprentices when they are back at their workplace. For example, many centres have an e-learning platform which supports apprentices to consolidate their learning and prepare them for their next sessions at the training centre.
- Through the effective organisation of quarterly reviews by centres, many employers provide feedback to staff on their apprentices' progress in the workplace and what is required in their future training experiences.
- Overall, employers and apprentices are very satisfied with the delivery of the MA programme and would recommend the programme to prospective applicants.

Area for development

- In more than a few centres, opportunities to reinforce core skills development in teaching sessions are not taken and apprentices therefore fail to see the relevance of core skills within their overall MA programme.

How well do staff reflect on provision to improve training?

Areas of positive practice

- Most teaching or training staff meet regularly to reflect and discuss their experiences and plan for future improvements to their delivery.
- In a few centres, a mixture of approaches to the observation of staff in training sessions is used to support the development of staff in their teaching approaches. For example, in one centre, an Ofsted assessor has been hired to observe staff and discuss their teaching approaches to plan for improvement. In other centres, a more informal approach is utilised in which staff and their peers observe each other and offer advice on training styles to effect improvements to the delivery of training.
- In all centres, external verification events are positive and their outcomes are shared with staff to help maintain standards and consistency. Formal verification events are held regularly and almost all staff use these to ensure they are meeting the standards set by the awarding bodies.

Areas for development

- In a few centres, staff do not engage systematically in reflecting upon their provision and delivery and do not routinely contribute to plans for improvement and enhancement.

- Improvement plans in some centres are not sufficiently specific or measurable to allow staff to evaluate progress and develop a continual focus on improving the learning experiences for apprentices.

How well do employers and apprentices participate in the development and planning of training?

Areas of positive practice

- Regular and effective meetings, and communication between most centre staff and apprentices and employers, help staff to identify and agree appropriate goals and targets related to improving the learning experiences for the apprentices.
- In the majority of centres, feedback from employers and apprentices is used well to plan training. For example, a few centres will use the feedback from apprentices to plan project work related to their employers requirements.

Area for development

- In three centres, apprentices and employers have limited opportunities to comment on training and are insufficiently involved in the design of training sessions which diminishes the learning experience for apprentices.

Creativity, Innovation and Impact

Supporting Apprentices' Further Learning – LAGTA BOSCH

LAGTA BOSCH received feedback from employers over the future development of their apprentices, particularly in relation to vehicle electrics. The centre responded by deciding to offer free of charge diagnostics courses, which were Bosch approved and certificated, for 3rd and 4th year apprentices.

In August 2016, the Bosch Vehicle Systems Electrical (VSE) course was delivered to a first cohort of eight apprentices. This course is designed to raise the basic electrical knowledge gained in the apprenticeship to a higher level and uses more practical activities in the workshop.

The feedback received from both apprentices and employers on this course was very positive, with both appreciating the benefit of these skills to the apprentice and their employer.

The intention is to extend this scheme to include the delivery of a second Bosch course, Operation of Bosch Kline Tester System (KTS), to all apprentices to further develop their vocational skills and to engender a culture of lifelong learning. This course will also contribute to the apprentices' broader employability skills and give them enhanced opportunities for progression within the automotive industry.

How good is our management of training delivery?

How well does the centre work with partners to improve outcomes for apprentices?

GRADE: very good

Areas of positive practice

- All centres have productive links with a range of strategic partners. These links ensure that automotive engineering provision is highly responsive to the changing requirements of the industry and meets the needs of employers well. For example, in some centres, staff assist employers with the recruitment and selection of apprentices. Other centres work effectively with local schools to promote apprenticeships to senior pupils or to offer pre-apprenticeship type programmes that foster interest from a wide range of young people.
- Assessors work effectively with employers as they visit the workplace to assess the performance of their apprentices. This approach also helps to build stronger relationships to help develop the training as part of the employer's individual requirements.
- Almost all centres work proactively with partners to promote apprenticeships to female pupils and young people. These encourage the uptake of MAs by females and respond to government priorities, particularly those priorities relating to improving gender imbalance.

Areas for development

- Almost all colleges over-rely on anecdotal evidence from employers, which is insufficiently robust to inform improvement planning and progress.
- Although almost all centres have introduced initiatives to improve the gender balance among apprentices, they have yet to demonstrate an improvement on female recruitment.

Creativity, Innovation and Impact

Core Skills Contextualisation at VW Audi Group

The curriculum team have worked well with the *Outward Bound Trust* to develop a schedule for the contextualisation of core skills for apprentices. The outward bound week is specifically designed for apprentices to gain core skills in a different and interesting environment. As part of their training, apprentices develop customer service and communication skills when preparing customer cars. This involves a check list of actions that must be completed accurately and on time to ensure the customer car is prepared fully for handover on the due date.

The *Outward Bound Trust* have used the standard customer car preparation sheet and adapted this into a series of tasks that apprentices undertake on their outward bound week. Apprentices must attend this mandatory part of their training. This provides apprentices the opportunity to develop their core skills in a different context to their workplace, with the advantage that each skill gained contributes to their core skill profile. The sessions are carefully planned to ensure that more than one female apprentice attends, to ensure other female apprentices do not feel isolated in a predominately male group.

By the end of the outward bound week, those apprentices that complete the tasks achieve most of the core skills required for their level of study. These include working with others, communication and also allow the apprentices to gain confidence and leadership skills.

Leadership and quality culture

How good is our strategic leadership?

GRADE: very good

How effective is leadership for partnership working and delivery of training?

Areas of positive practice

- Most centres have set relevant strategic targets to achieve their ambitions and to meet the priorities of the Scottish Government and the centre's contractual obligations.
- Team working across staff in almost of the centres is strong and staff are well-motivated to provide high-quality training to their apprentices and prepare them well for the roles they will undertake in their workplace.
- Most centres work well with employers and feedback from employers on their engagement with the centre staff is very positive, illustrating the strong commitment centre staff have to their apprentices training needs.
- Managers are committed to providing the best possible training programme for apprentices and to promoting a strong ethos of teamwork in their centres.
- Colleges use their Regional Outcome Agreements well to focus on the Scottish Government seven year DYW strategy and expand opportunities for MA provision, together with the introduction of Foundation Apprenticeships.

Area for development

- In a few colleges, managers do not undertake a focussed analysis of the success of the component parts of the MA programme to inform improvement, nor do managers provide a sufficient emphasis on staff development to identify improvements in the delivery of training.

How well do leaders secure improvements in the quality and impact of training?

Areas of positive practice

- Most centres follow robust procedures for self-evaluation and operational planning to ensure that training meets the requirements of the apprentices and their employers.
- Almost all independent training providers utilise comprehensive and robust self-evaluation procedures and use employer and apprentice feedback well to consider improvements to the learning experience for apprentices.
- Most staff use self-evaluation procedures well to conduct in-depth analysis of their performance and the regular performance reviews between staff and managers lead to improvements in the delivery of the MA programmes.
- Almost all apprentices are confident in discussing areas of concern in their programmes with staff and are satisfied that staff appreciate these concerns and improvements are made as a result of these conversations.
- In most centres, evaluative processes and resulting improvements are informed well by employer feedback. In these centres, there is a strong ethos of quality improvement which matches the needs of automotive retailers.

Areas for development

- In a few centres, staff have an over-reliance on informal and anecdotal evidence to inform improvements.

- Most colleges' plans for improvement are insufficiently detailed or focussed to target areas for development and provide effective arrangements to measure improvements.

Creativity, innovation and impact

Dundee and Angus College

Internal Monitoring and Reporting of MA provision

Dundee and Angus College has developed a reporting methodology which allows the college Contract Management team to track both the outcome performance (achievement of Modern Apprenticeship awards) and financial drawdown (milestones and output-based funding). This system allows interrogation of information for individual Modern Apprenticeship candidates across all delivered Modern Apprenticeship frameworks.

Thirteen different reports are made available, which are produced for college teams, at the same time as SDS provide their performance report. To ensure that college assessors receive real time information on their candidates, all reports are posted on the Customer Engagement Team portal. Additionally, the Modern Apprenticeship assessors and their team leaders receive an email detailing the availability of the reports and any SDS progress reviews required for the following month, by MA framework and candidate.

The Contract Management team operate a traffic light system to identify any areas of concern, either through lack of candidate achievement or in financial drawdown from SDS. The Contract Management team make direct contact with 'Red Light' academic teams for further discussion and an action plan is put in place immediately to address any areas for concern.

The proactive nature of the Contract Management team in developing this reporting system has generated closer working relationship between team members and academic teams delivering the MA contracts. With this system in place, the contract performance for MA achievement rates across all MA programmes has been increased to between 78% and 80%, which in turn has increased MA programme income by 15%.

Capacity to Improve

How good is our capacity to improve?

- A small number of *Excellent* grades were awarded in the centres we visited. However, aggregating the grades from most centres which were allocated grades of *Good* or *Satisfactory*, reduced the summary grade to *Very Good*.
- Training is delivered well in all centres, and in a few centres, is of a very high standard. However, in more than a few centres, staff miss the opportunity to seek or use feedback from apprentices on their training activities to plan activities appropriately.
- In most centres, regular and effective meetings and communication between staff and apprentices and employers, help staff to identify and agree appropriate goals and targets with apprentices and employers.
- Achievement rates in independent training provider centres are high overall and in a few centres, very high. These centres fast-track apprentices who are progressing well onto higher level programmes, identifying their potential early and providing high levels of support from staff.
- However, achievement rates in three colleges are lower than the Scottish average for the Automotive MA.
- Automotive training programmes go beyond the minimum requirements and are tailored to meet the bespoke needs of employers. Apprentices are able to use the knowledge they gain and the skills they develop in the workplace. This is negotiated between centres and employers and is key element in ensuring the apprentices' training transfers well to the workplace.
- Centres engage effectively with local authorities and schools to generate interest in employment in the industry. For example, a centre delivers training for pre-apprenticeship young learners as part of the authority's Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) strategy.
- Most centres have industry standard equipment and learning environments. In a few centres, the training environment is of a very high standard, utilising state of the art resources. In other centres, the use of information technology and VLEs, are used well to help apprentices gain easy access to learning resources and store their assessments.
- In a few colleges, the equipment and tools in use are out-of-date and do not reflect current industry standards.
- Most centres have set relevant strategic priorities to achieve their ambitions and to meet the priorities of the Scottish Government and the centre's contractual obligations. Team working among staff is strong and staff are well-motivated to provide high-quality off-the-job training to their apprentices.
- Staff in a few centres have an over-reliance on informal and anecdotal evidence to inform improvements and most college plans for improvement are insufficiently detailed or focussed to target areas for development and provide effective arrangements to measure improvements.

Recommendations

Centres should:

- Work with college HMIs (Her Majesty's Inspectors) and SDS Skills Investment Advisers (SIAs) to evaluate how those centres with Excellent grades are delivering their programmes, to learn from the impact these centres have on their apprentices, and adapt their approaches accordingly.
- Work to improve the achievement rates for automotive apprentices to the national average for all apprenticeship programmes in Scotland.
- Take action to contextualise core skills units with industry relevant examples and content to challenge apprentices and develop and improve their core skills.
- Continue to develop strategies to ensure applicants with protected characteristics, particularly females, apply and are recruited.
- Ensure equipment and tools meet current industry standards and apprentices have good opportunities to use them regularly to develop their practical skills.
- Establish formal mechanisms to gather feedback from apprentices and employers to design and develop improvement plans in areas such as learning and teaching approaches.
- Ensure that self-evaluation arrangements are more systematically applied and link effectively to action planning for improvement, with measurable targets.

Education Scotland should:

- Continue to monitor colleges delivering automotive apprenticeships in order to support them to improve their apprentices' achievement rates and the training experience for all their apprentices.
- Work with colleges, schools and authorities to deliver the implementation plans to meet the targets of the seven year Scottish Government Youth Employment Strategy.
- Continue to work with colleges to identify and respond to changing needs within the automotive sector through partnership with employers and awarding bodies.

SDS should:

- Continue to work with providers to support employers and awarding bodies and other stakeholders to respond to the changing needs within the automotive sector.
- Support centres to meet the ambitions from the DYW strategies.
- Monitor and review progress of ITPs on achieving the recommendations within this report.

Appendix 1 – External review methodology

Education Scotland’s external review of the off-the-job training element of MAs builds upon and complements Skills Development Scotland’s (SDS) current quality assurance arrangements. These arrangements require all non-college training providers to demonstrate they are meeting SDS quality standards as set out in the SDS Quality Assurance Framework. SDS takes assurance of MA programme delivery from Education Scotland’s external review of colleges, which focus on the contribution made by training providers and the quality of the training they deliver.

A team of Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) from Education Scotland and Associate Assessors (AA), from SDS, colleges and Independent Training Providers (ITP) conduct external reviews. Associate Assessor input ensures that each review team has the expert knowledge and industry-related experience to ensure a full and well-informed review process. The review team evaluated the work undertaken by a sample of colleges and ITPs, referred to collectively as ‘centres’ in this report.

External review approaches incorporate:

- Observation of training activities.
- Discussions held with centre managers and staff.
- Discussions held with employers and apprentices.

Upon conclusion of the external review, a written report is provided to each centre by Education Scotland. This includes the grades awarded for each of the five high-level questions posed during the review (see below). This report is shared with SDS but is not published externally, although centres may choose to share their individual reports after the main report is published. The findings from each of the visits are brought together to generate a national report, which is published by Education Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. National reports are designed to inform Ministers about the quality of the off-the-job training element within specific MA programmes. The report will also assist providers in preparing and implementing their quality improvement and enhancement agendas, and include examples of excellent practice where identified.

The report uses the following terms to describe numbers and proportions:

almost all	over 90%
most	75-90%
majority	50-74%
less than half	15-49%
few	up to 15%

Appendix 2 – Grade exemplification

The grades which will be awarded to each of the elements are:

- **excellent** *Outstanding and sector leading.*
- **very good** *Major Strengths.*
- **good** *Important strengths with some areas for improvement.*
- **satisfactory** *Strengths just outweigh weaknesses.*
- **weak** *Important weaknesses.*
- **unsatisfactory** *Major weaknesses.*

Grade illustrations

- An evaluation of **excellent** applies to provision in which apprentices' experiences and achievements are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the current provision. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.
- An evaluation of **very good** applies to provision characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for development and any that do exist do not significantly diminish apprentices' experiences. While an evaluation of *very good* represents a high standard of provision, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to make provision without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the centre will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.
- An evaluation of **good** applies to provision characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for development. An evaluation of good represents a standard of provision in which the strengths have a significant positive impact on apprentices. However, the quality of apprentices' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which development is required. It implies that the centre should seek to improve further the areas of important strengths, but take action to address the areas for development.
- An evaluation of **satisfactory** applies to provision characterised by strengths which just outweigh areas for development. An evaluation of satisfactory indicates that apprentices have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on apprentices' experiences. However, while the areas for development will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of apprentices' experiences. It implies that the centre should take action to address areas for further development while building on its strengths.
- An evaluation of **weak** applies to provision which has some strengths, but where there are important areas for development. In general, an evaluation of weak may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important areas for development will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish apprentices' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the centre. Where a grading of weak is given, it will lead to follow-up activity from SDS compliance managers.

- An evaluation of ***unsatisfactory*** applies when there are major areas for development in provision requiring immediate remedial action. Apprentices' experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for provision evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the immediate support given by the centre. Where a grading of weak is given, it will lead to a follow-up review by staff from SDS and Education Scotland within a year.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk, or telephone us on the number below, or write to us addressing your letter to

**The Complaints Manager
Education Scotland**

Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330
E enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.education.gov.scot

© Crown Copyright, 2017

You may re-use this information (excluding images and logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence providing that it is reproduced accurately and not in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Education Scotland copyright and the document title specified.

To view this licence, visit <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence> or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.