



## New College Durham

### Higher Apprenticeships under SASE

New College Durham is one of the top performing colleges in the country and offers a wide range of full and part-time higher education programmes. In 2014/2015 the college made a strategic decision to strengthen its higher education portfolio to include Higher Apprenticeships. Working with employers to identify and educate them on the benefits of Higher Apprenticeships, marketing and recruitment got underway. To strengthen our offer we utilised our Foundation Degree Awarding Powers and worked in partnership with Sector Skills Councils to map our Foundation Degrees into the current frameworks. Having Higher Apprenticeships in our portfolio gives learners and employers a diverse and comprehensive curriculum offer which allows progression from Intermediate Apprenticeships right through to Degree Apprenticeships.

At the end of 2015/2016 we will have in excess of 200 Higher Apprenticeships programmes being delivered across the 9 frameworks.

#### 1. Apprenticeship Delivery

New College Durham has a dedicated Apprenticeship department, who manage the learners' journey with their employer from initial contact to completion of their programme. The Higher Apprenticeship is underpinned by a robust initial assessment process incorporating literacy and numeracy, and appropriate aptitude tests. This informs their suitability for the programme and results in a personalised learning plan that meet the needs of both learner and employer. Every learner and employer is assigned their own Work Based Liaison Officer, who is responsible for monitoring and maintaining strong working relationships between the apprentice and employer. They will provide support and guidance for both the learner and employer, in addition to Apprenticeship Framework progression.

The School of Sport, Business, Public Services and ICT has introduced Higher Apprenticeships in Business Administration, Management, HR and Accountancy. The CMI Management Higher Apprenticeship has been particularly popular with over 100 students on this programme with further cohorts scheduled. This programme is mapped to the CMI Management Level 5 Diploma and students' complete 5 modules including a management project that is work related and is designed to solve a specific problem in the workplace.

Mike Wallbank, Operations Manager, St Aidan's & Van Mildert Colleges Durham University said the CMI programme had *"specifically impacted on a staff member's increased capability in managing our Preventative Maintenance Plan and our annual Audit programme. He is more aware of the impact of actions on a wide variety of stakeholders and has increased*



*communication skills as a result. The course has bolstered his confidence in dealing with a wide variety of management, colleagues, students, and staff and business contacts”.*

New College has been innovative and it has used blended learning to support CMI students with students attending college every other week and during the week away from college they access videos and resources that have been created by the teaching team. This has proved to be highly successful and one of the learners stating *“The webinars for the blended learning are excellent and have plenty of information to enable me to write my assignments from the comfort of my own home and the course has helped me to plan better especially the project management topic, as I was already working on a project and the guidance of the course has helped me project manage a successful refurbishment of the college bar for the students”.*

The college was part the consultative group working with the Leadership and Management employer led Trailblazer that launched the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship in September 2016.

Another successful Higher Apprenticeship in CIPD HR has recruited almost 40 students who all become student members of the CIPD during induction. Programmes can be customised to meet individual needs of employers; the programme designed for Durham County Council has been adapted to meet their specific requirements and includes modules on Employment Law, Resource and Talent Planning and Contemporary Issues in HR.

All programmes involve a mix of academic and vocational theory. The programmes are challenging and demanding but organised students are doing very well.

## **2. AAT Case Study – Bradley Wilson, Certax**

Bradley Wilson began the level 2 Intermediate Accounting Apprenticeship in 2013 with his employer Certax working as an accounts assistant. Following the completion of his level 2 Apprenticeship Bradley progressed to a level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship in Accountancy working as a Trainee Accountant Technician. He is now studying a Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship in Accountancy, looking to complete in December 2017. Bradley is currently a full time employee working as an accounting technician and team leader.

After excellent GCSE results Bradley decided to undertake his A-Levels in Maths, Business and Economics. His pathway would have been to go to university however he decided the apprenticeship route would be better for him and New College Durham found him an apprenticeship with Certax Accountancy. Within his first year Bradley was tasked with maintaining financial records, controlling cash transactions and verifying financial data. As he progressed to level 3, Bradley’s job role as an accountant technician was to work in all areas of finance. He gained experience in book keeping, taxes, payroll & clients’ accounts.



Bradley passed his qualification at an advanced level with flying colours; his employer was constantly impressed with Bradley's enthusiasm and dedication to his studies.

As Bradley progressed within Certax they recommended he continued his studies to a Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship in Accountancy. Whilst completing his level 4 apprenticeship Bradley's tasks have increased and he now undertakes overall strategic responsibility for accounts payable and receivable working with wider credit management as well as handling budgets and writing reports. A statement from Bradley's employer states "*We are extremely pleased with Bradley's progress and client contacts, well done Bradley*". Bradley is looking forward to completing his qualification and becoming a fully trained accountant.

---

### 3. Additional Student Comments

**Tracey** - The programme has given me the opportunity to develop my current skills. I have found the assignments interesting and relative to middle management. Through research for the assignments I have looked at Policies and Procedures that are already in place in the Trust and it has enabled me to look at the Trust from a more strategic point of view. I understand more about why we are implementing service developments to progress to a more robust NHS Trust who gives the best outcomes for patients, staff and stakeholders.

**Rozeena** - Modules I have found particularly helpful, where I feel I have then been able to bring back the knowledge gained and apply it rapidly in the work area to good effect, are the information module, which has helped me focus on Dictate IT SOPs, (I know the Systems team have appreciated my support with this), and the "manage a project" unit, which has given me the know-how and understanding to process map tasks and processes for change and improvement. Our current unit is stakeholders and quality. I am particularly interested in the quality aspect, as I want to ensure our admin areas develop quality in our processes going forward.

**Susan** - After deliberating about signing up for the Apprenticeship programme, I have no regrets. My confidence and knowledge of business management has increased and I feel that this Apprenticeship will give me the ability to progress within managerial posts. I have received excellent support from tutors and have had guidance and support throughout

---

**Mo Dixon**

**Vice Principal**

[mo.dixon@newdur.ac.uk](mailto:mo.dixon@newdur.ac.uk)

**March, 2016**

---