**Professional Economist Integrated Degree Apprenticeship Consultation Briefing Note**

**Overview**

Developing a professional economist integrated degree apprenticeship standard will enable employers of economists to open a new route into the profession for bright school and college leavers, allowing them to gain an economics degree while working. This will not only help organisations meet demand for economists but also aim to help deliver objectives around helping to improve social mobility and widen diversity in the economics field.

This will be a four-year degree level apprenticeship programme to deliver first-rate professional economists for the public, private and third sectors. Apprentices will split their time between university study and the workplace and are employed throughout the course.

Degree apprenticeships are focused on developing the appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for a specific occupation.

Degree apprenticeship tuition fees are funded by the employer via the Government levy, and apprentices are paid a wage throughout the apprenticeship, so degree apprentices can graduate debt-free.

**Progress and timeline**

The Government Economic Service have committed to leading the development of this apprenticeship by working to bring together and lead a Trailblazer group of employers from across the sector. This Trailblazer group have worked with partner Universities to produce a draft standard which outlines the proposed approach as well as a more detailed end-point assessment (EPA) document which documents how occupational competence will be assessed.

The standard and EPA documents will now be refined, reviewed and submitted to the Institute for Apprenticeships (IFA) with a view to getting approval in late spring / early summer 2018.

January - March 2018

May – November 2017

November 2017 – Jan 2018

May 2018 (subject to IFA approval)

**Consultation**

The consultation launched in late November and will close 8th January. This consultation is primarily aimed at employers to ensure that the proposed apprenticeship standard will produce apprenticeship graduates that have the appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours to undertake the role of professional economist in any business in any sector.

We are keen to engage as many stakeholders in the development and launch of the standard as possible. We believe that the more organisations we have involved, the better the professional economist apprenticeship will be.

Although the consultation survey is primarily focused at employers, we value feedback from any interested parties. Please complete this short 10 question survey which should take less than 10 minutes. Please e-mail economic.apprenticeship@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk if you would like to become involved in the project, would like any further information or wish to register your views on the standard in free text.

**Why use the apprenticeship route?**

Apprenticeships are an efficient ‘tried and tested’ way to recruit new staff, re-train or upskill existing staff and help tackle skill shortages. Most of the apprentices learning can be undertaken in the workplace, minimizing disruption and maximizing their impact. The approach to academic training can also be tailored, with traditional approaches similar to a degree sandwich course, off the job training front loaded or a more distance learning centric study all examples of valid options.

Apprenticeships are also a great way of attracting enthusiastic talent with fresh ideas. They are tailored to specific job roles, making them flexible to the needs of your business. Hiring more Apprentices can help reduce staff turnover, by increasing employee satisfaction and brand loyalty. Employees who have been trained in-house tend to be highly motivated, committed to the company and supportive of its business objectives. Employers can generally recoup the full cost of training and assessing their apprentices up to a maximum of £27k per apprentice. However, employers must cover the cost of the apprentices’ salary throughout the training.

An apprenticeship encourages employees to think of their job as a career and to stay with the company for longer, which reduces recruitment costs. Offering an apprenticeship to an existing member of staff shows that you see them as an integral part of the workforce and are happy to invest in their future. According to data from the National Apprenticeship Service, 92% of companies that have taken on apprentices believe this leads to a more motivated and satisfied workforce and 80% have seen a significant increase in employee retention. An apprenticeship is the only way to allow individuals to gain a degree on the job; this will equip them with the tools and skill set needed to work in the real world. Candidates will be able to enjoy a range of benefits while studying and performing in the workplace such as:

* Practical experience gained through paid employment
* A full package (Contract of employment, Apprenticeship Agreement & Degree qualification)
* NUS card providing up to 50% off many health/social/fashion/travel retailers and some discount on travel