

Invitation to Tender: University Alliance Apprenticeships Research (Labour Party skills policy)

[University Alliance](#) is looking for an external organisation or individual to work with the team to produce a policy report that models the implications of the Labour Party's skills policy on the delivery higher and degree apprenticeships and other high-level skills provision by professional and technical universities and makes recommendations on the potential implementation of these policies.

This is one of two policy reports University Alliance is commissioning on higher and degree apprenticeships. The aim of the other report is to identify the conditions needed to deliver the targets in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan to provide 22% of all training for clinical staff through apprenticeship routes by 2031/32 (16% by 2028/29) and introduce medical degree apprenticeships. The ITT for that report can be found [here](#). Individuals and organisations are welcome to bid to deliver both reports.

About University Alliance

University Alliance (UA) represents 16 of the UK's leading professional and technical universities. Our members specialise in working with industry and employers. Their teaching is hands-on and designed to prepare students for careers. Their knowledge and research drive industry to innovate, thrive and meet challenges.

Our members are leading the way in innovation and business support in the green, tech, creative and healthcare industries. They are leading providers of teaching in healthcare, the creative arts, degree apprenticeships and more. We collaborate as UA to benefit our members and their communities, and to provide expertise to policy makers.

Background

Higher and degree apprenticeships is a priority policy area for University Alliance and our members are some of the largest and fastest growing providers of these apprenticeships. UA has a variety of member networks, including for apprenticeship leads, which meet on a regular basis and inform our policy influencing.

In October 2023, we published [Let's Get Technical](#), which sets out how the next government could harness the power of professional and technical universities and includes goals and actions on apprenticeships. Ahead of the next general election, we are expanding our evidence base, analysis and recommendations on the areas set out in *Let's Get Technical*.

The requirement

We are looking to commission an individual or organisation to work closely with our staff team and our members to produce a policy report on the potential implications and implementation of the Labour Party's skills policy, with a focus on higher and degree apprenticeships. The report should set out analysis and targeted policy recommendations that is detailed and robust whilst also being engaging and easy for range of external audiences to digest, including civil servants, MPs, and Ministers.

The aim of the report is to model the implications of the Labour Party's skills policy on the delivery higher and degree apprenticeships and other high-level skills provision by professional and technical universities and to shape the implementation of these policies, should the Labour Party win the next general election.

The report should address some or all of the following:

- Modelling the potential implications of existing Labour Party policy relating to higher and degree apprenticeships and the growth of higher-level skills (such as reforms to the Apprenticeship Levy).
- Consideration of how existing Labour Party policies could be effectively implemented to minimise any risks identified and to maximise the contribution that professional and technical universities can make to the needs of the current and future workforce (such as the introduction of Skills England, Technical Excellence Colleges and devolving powers away from Westminster).
- Identifying gaps in current Labour Party policy on higher and degree apprenticeships and higher-level skills.
- Targeted policy recommendations on the implementation of existing Labour Party policy and new areas for development on higher and degree apprenticeships and higher-level skills.

Approach

We are happy to take advice on the methodology for the report, but we would like this to include engagement with University Alliance member universities (through UA's established network of member experts on apprenticeships) and close working with the UA staff team to shape targeted policy recommendations. We are also interested in seeing consideration of how interviews with external stakeholders and/or an ongoing role for some stakeholders as 'critical friends' could be incorporated into the methodology.

Project timeline

Date	Action
09.30 on Monday 18 th March 2024	Deadline for proposals
Tuesday 19 th March 2024	Interviews confirmed
Thursday 21 st and Friday 22 nd March 2024	Interviews held online
Monday 25 th March 2024	Successful bids confirmed
w/c 1 st April or w/c 8 th April 2024	Project kick-off
Wednesday 31 st July 2024 (provisional date)	Final report and project close

Tender process

Bidders must submit an electronic copy of their tender submission no later than 09.30 on Monday 18th March, with the subject line: ITT University Alliance Apprenticeships Research to: ellie@unialliance.ac.uk.

In submissions, bidders should detail how they propose to work with UA to develop the policy report. This should include:

- The methodology for developing the analysis and targeted policy recommendations.
- Previous work you/your organisations has delivered which is similar in focus.
- A breakdown of expected costs.
- Details of staff who will undertake the work, a breakdown of how their time will be spent and how their expertise will add value to University Alliance.
- Organisation details including name, legal status, full contact details and lead contact.

The contract for the successful provider will be made with University Alliance, for an initial term of 17 weeks, running from April – end of July 2024.

The value of this project cannot exceed £15k inclusive of all VAT and expenses. University Alliance is commissioning two reports on higher and degree apprenticeships. Individuals and organisations are welcome to bid to deliver both reports (up to a combined value of £30k inclusive of all VAT and expenses). The ITT for the other report can be found [here](#).

It is our preference to pay for the contract in two stages:

- Payment of 50% of agreed total on signing the contract.
- Final payment of 50% of agreed total upon receipt and formal approval of final report(s).

Within the contract we may agree certain deliverables conditional for receipt of the second payment.

In calculating project overheads, account should be taken of the fact that University Alliance is a non-profit making body.

If any person has an interest or connection with University Alliance, please provide that person's full name, position, and the nature of the connection/interest with University Alliance.

Evaluation of bids

The bids will be judged by the following criteria (% of total score):

- Clear proposal for the project – 60%
- Skills and relevant experience of the organisation/individual – 20%
- Value for money (though we are not bound to accept the lowest priced tender) – 20%

The information contained in this ITT and all other information made in connection with the project by University Alliance and UA's member universities is supplied on the basis that such information will be used only for the purposes of participating in the bidding process and delivering the project.

Information supplied as part of the tender process will also be treated with confidentiality.

If you have any questions regarding the tender, please contact Ellie Russell, Deputy Head of Policy ellie@unialliance.ac.uk.