Partnered innovation in the design and implementation of UK management education – new Management Degree Apprenticeships

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Introduction
This paper explores curriculum innovation via the development of new management education at a UK university, in the form of a Degree Apprenticeship. Curriculum development is rarely a smooth process where different departments or faculties are involved (Murray & Nallaya, 2016) given the nature of interpersonal relationships (Six & Skinner, 2010; Dickinson & Glasby, 2010; Lupton et al, 2001). This new curriculum is the result of innovative new partnerships, both internally across different faculties and externally with a professional body and a range of employers.
In exploring this new development, the study presents a view of an under-researched topic - the development of the UK's new hybrid qualifications, which offer a full undergraduate degree plus an Apprenticeship / Professional Award. Offering a fresh approach to work-integrated learning, the apprenticeship involves both theory and practice based around the apprentice's workplace –encompassing "*all and any learning that is situated in the workplace or arising directly out of workplace concerns" (Lester and Costley, 2010).*
Universities UK report numbers growing at a positive rate, "*with an estimated 1,500-2,000 due to start in 2016 across 40 universities."* (O'Malley, 2016).

The degree apprenticeship sits within an established tradition as a mode of learning and builds on work-based learning and work-integrated learning which have become a recognised part of education (Smith & Worsfold's, 2015; Billet & Choy, 2013; Dochy et al, 2011; Garner, 200). Apprenticeship builds theory to support effective understanding and to underpin effective action given that "*the knowledge necessary to perform useful work cannot be a body of knowledge to be learned – it is better acquired in the midst of action and dedicated to the task at hand"* (Raelin, 1997, 142). As with any effective apprenticeship, the new Degree Apprenticeship encompasses both short-term development focussed on job needs plus longer-term personal development (Fuller & Unwin, 2016; 2003).
Therefore, in addressing this topic, it may be said that the nature of learning in the award is familiar but the way in which the programme has been developed, the resulting approach offering three subject pathways for the degree and the way it will be offered, are its claim to innovation. Discussions across universities both in the UK and in Europe suggest that this design process is unusual and that insights from the collaboration process would be of interest within and beyond higher education. Similarly, this programme has been developed rapidly and relied on positive and effective internal collaboration, something that may prove problematic or may be a slow process whether in higher education (Murray & Nallaya, 2016) or elsewhere in the public sector (Six & Skinner, 2010; Lupton et al, 2001).

The paper is important in developing understanding of the curriculum development process and of innovation and collaboration as part of that, given the lack of focus on curriculum development in universities (Hurlimann et al, 2013; Aziz, 2005), despite its importance, and the lack of collaboration which may be evidenced in this process (Murray & Nellaya, 2016). Indeed, Murray & Nallaya (2016, 1306) stress that

"no matter how theoretically well informed it may be and how great the need for it, bringing about curriculum change is invariably a challenging process, particularly where it implies change not merely to the what of teaching but also the how".

The aim of the research is to understand the partnership working which resulted in this new award. Although the research questions will be considered more fully in the methodology section, these are likely to include:

(1) How has the collaborative process supported innovations in curriculum design?
(2) How have the different partners perceived their shaping of the new award and how do they see other partners?
(3) In developing the programme how have the informal and formal aspects of the collaboration worked?
(4) In developing the programme how have ideas about work-integrated learning coalesced? Or are there differences in the meaning attributed to this term?

We anticipate this informing theory in two fields. One is the educational, i.e., the design and development of new curricula. The other is within the area of partnerships and collaboration. Literature related to intra-organisational partnerships, the role of formal and informal processes and the nature of power and negotiated space in such relationships, all form part of the understanding of how the developments occurred. In addition, we anticipate practical implications since the findings should inform better practice both in collaboration for universities and in effective curriculum innovation.

This paper therefore begins by explaining the background to the current development of UK apprenticeships before considering the impetus for the management degree apprenticeship. The format of this new award and innovations in the design process are then discussed before partnership and collaboration (both within the institution and with external bodies and employers) are explored. These provide the literature context to frame the study and support interpretation and review of results.

Background to the UK evolution of degree apprenticeships
Apprenticeships have long been seen as a route to prepare the young for entry into particular occupations (Fuller & Unwin, 2004) with variations in the format and types of apprenticeship across Europe (Deissinger et al, 2011). The learning and teaching literature often positions apprenticeships as initial vocational education and training, as part of a journey towards intermediate level expertise (Fuller & Unwin, 2016). While true for the growing number of pre-university apprenticeships in the UK, the Degree Apprenticeship differs in its focus on higher level skills and knowledge. It is also open to mature individuals with practical experience but without a theoretical context. Degree Apprenticeships have had a slow evolution, with universities and employers initially reluctant to change the existing qualification structures to take these new formats on board until direct action from government catalysed a change in attitudes through the introduction of a new tax - the Apprenticeship Levy.

The Apprenticeship Levy, administered by the UK Tax authority - HMRC, and charged at 0.5% of payroll from April 2017 will be applied to all UK organisations with an annual payroll of £3 million or more. The money levied can be accessed if the organisation makes an investment in apprenticeships, with training needs met by an approved training provider or delivered by the organisation itself. (BIS, 2015). These direct actions by the UK

Government, which have changed attitudes, followed a failure to achieve apprenticeship targets in pre-election pledges to create 3 million new apprenticeships in England by 2020.

These same pledges have been carried forward into the current UK parliament (BIS, 2015) with expectations of broad returns from their implementation. Education with a practical work-based focus is expected to address issues for particular groups who struggle to enter higher education and the workforce (Cameron, 2016). Higher level work-based education is seen by government as especially important to solve the persistent pockets of skills deficiency occurring in higher skilled occupations which contributed to lower productivity and poor UK business performance (UCKES, 2014) and which led to social divisions (Cameron, 2016; BIS, 2015). The Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeships would also address the reported dissonance between what is provided in education and the needs of employers (UCKES, 2014; BIS, 2015). This, then, is the context for the upsurge in interest from large employers into apprenticeships. The next section explores how the management degree apprenticeship has been developed in response to this interest.

Format of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship
As suggested above, in the reported gap between what is provided by education and what is required by employers (UCJES, 2014), this initiative addresses the leadership and management performance gaps in UK business and industry. These leadership gaps have been reported consistently in the media, governmental reports and academic papers (for instance, O'Malley, 2016; Hayton, 2015; Lester and Costley, 2010; Leitch, 2006).
The aim is to integrate academic learning at degree level with on-the-job practical learning and training to meet simultaneously the personal aspirations of the individual student and the skills and knowledge needs of employers. Apprentices are paid to work full-time with an employer on this four year programme, while studying towards a BA (Hons) Business Management Professional. They study a core curriculum and attend approximately 26 teaching days per year on block release of between one and five days.

Apprentices successfully completing 3 years will receive the Level 5 Professional body accredited Diploma in Management and Leadership. Apprentices who successfully complete the degree over the four years are entered for assessment for the Degree Apprenticeship and for Chartered Manager status. This assessment takes into account the academic work completed on the Degree programme, as well as the skills and experience the apprentice has built up in the workplace and presented to the Professional body assessor in the form of a portfolio.

The format of the award is indicated in Figure 1. It has three pathways at the university:
• the BA (Hons) Business Management Professional;
• the BA (Hons) Business Management Professional in Hospitality ;
• the BA (Hons) Business Management Professional in Retail

The learning methods on these pathways incorporate long-held constructs about the power of reflection in learning (Revans, 1988) with an emphasis on the development of apprentices as reflective practitioners. Within the degree therefore, apprentices are expected to capture and record both their academic work and workplace activities, which will form the portfolio for the end point assessment. The building of this portfolio is therefore integral to the degree programme and the Professional body assessment.

Innovation in curriculum design

The curriculum innovation here is seen in the development of an apprenticeship via an intensive collaboration process. The government's aim is that employers have "full ownership of apprenticeships, designing and owning the content of all apprenticeship standards and assessments" (BIS, 2015). As a first step this was carried out for the management standards by a group of employers coming together with experts from a professional body to design apprenticeships meeting business needs. Given the higher level of the Degree Apprenticeships, universities were involved, mapping higher level skills onto undergraduate level awards.

This was only the first part of the collaboration, however. Once the university in this study began to develop the awards, it was clear that three pathways would be needed to meet the diverse needs of the large employers interested in participating. This included more than one faculty and many departments. While this involved many informal exchanges, agreements were formalised despite these being internal institutional collaborations. As this collaboration involved different departments, faculties and campuses, initial discussions also included more formal steps such as the signing of a memorandum of understanding by each faculty Dean.

Hence the Degree Apprenticeships network comprises departments from Faculty A (Business & Law), which leads the project, from Faculty B (which includes the Department of Food and Tourism Management) and from Faculty C (which includes the Department of Business & Management). Course staff from each department have collaborated to provide the relevant core and specialist pathway, with strong input from a group of large employers and the professional body, while a specialist Apprenticeship unit provides administrative support. Managing a degree across three Faculties will present challenges and result in additional overheads. The differences in culture, working practices, timetabling approaches etc. across faculties will present challenges which will require not only the formal memoranda signed by Deans but also significant support from heads of departments to ensure shared understanding of what is required. This will need overall monitoring to address dissonance between delivery partners but this has been recognised by each partner and a mixture of formal and informal systems has resulted.

Collaboration involves not only course design and delivery but also initial recruitment as a partnered process. Employers are responsible for recruiting and employing apprentices while the University vets candidates for academic requirements, typically 260-300 UCAS points plus English and Maths at GCSE. This is a new kind of degree course that cannot initially benefit from widespread exposure via traditional UK recruitment routes, but will do so in future. It therefore requires specific targeted recruitment. Discussion with large employers suggests that they expect to recruit predominantly from students with good grades who want to join the workforce early and to avoid incurring large debts. In addition, recruitment processes will be much more demanding than entry to typical undergraduate programmes as organisations will need to establish aptitude, attitude and motivation, probably by a combination of interviews, assessment days and psychometric testing.

Having described the partner context in the formation of the new award, the next section identifies theoretical contexts by exploring the literature on collaboration, to see how this will inform our study.

Collaboration contexts

The literature on collaboration is diverse, with much related to social exchange theory and found in studies of company or organisational mergers and acquisitions, stakeholders in these and in supply chains, corporate entrepreneurship and technology-enabled collaboration. In the public and third sector, discussions of collaboration include dimensions of power and control due to shifts in the nature of funding and operation (Hexham & Vengam, 2005). Social exchange theory is seen as important in explaining relations between individuals and organisations and as fundamental to interorganisational relationship theories (Qi and Chau, 2013). Here social exchange involves a series of interactions usually seen as interdependent on, and contingent to, the actions of another person (Blau, 1964; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). It also underpins understanding of the *"behaviour of each actor contributing to the exchange under social structures"* (Qi and Chau, 2013, 122 citing Kern and Willcocks, 2000) Reciprocity is direct and between one individual and another, or indirect in not expecting return from the individual but rather the group, with the golden rule applied in doing unto others what they do to you (Authors, forthcoming).

In organisational terms, however, many of the studies of collaboration focus on inter-rather than intra- organisational collaboration. As an example, Hardy et al (2003) build on discussions by Phillips et al (2000) to define collaboration as *"a cooperative, inter-organizational relationship that is negotiated in an ongoing communicative process, and which relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control."* While this works to some extent on our study, since there is inter-organisational working, we also need to review research into intra-organisational collaboration and stakeholder literature.

To some extent, exploring the intra-organisational contexts has resonance in the corporate entrepreneurship literature, where research suggests the importance of networks for the development of major innovations (Kelley et al, 2009; Dougherty, 1992 and Hardy, 1996). Given that this is a major innovation in a UK context, the bringing together of different groups and individuals fits the described model. Further, Kelley et al (2009, p.223) view networks as *"avenues through which the diverse and situation-specific knowledge needs of an innovation project can be accessed across the organisational environment"* but suggest a gap in the literature in understanding questions about the nature of the network and its formation *"particularly how networks shift and adapt for non-routine phenomena"*.

In the network supporting design and development of the Degree Apprenticeship, employers are partners rather than stakeholders but there are interesting perspectives from the stakeholder literature, linking collaboration with power and voice. There are frequent calls not only for 'dialogue' but also the need for more dialogue to resolve stakeholder issues. Kuhn (2008) suggests that while dialogue is a likely provision for stakeholders, it is often ineffective since it is merely lip service rather than an allocation of power in decision-making. In our study, there are multiple stakeholders, described as partners in the process, from different departments across this large university and from professional bodies and employers. The students might, however, be considered stakeholders but they have also been consulted on aspects of the award and will be part of the further development of the award, post launch.

In exploring the partners' views of the curriculum design process, values may play a large part in the individual expression of self in the network (Kuhn, 2008). Relationships within a network are affected by perceptions of trust and obligation, and by views of dependence (Burt, 2000). This impacts upon altruism or organisational citizenship when individuals assist others within the network with their time or other resources (Reagans and McEvily, 2003). If values play a part in successful collaboration at the university, this may be

encouraged by the core values which the organisation promotes or embodies, so that collaborations rather than individual achievements are encouraged (Cross et al., 2002).

There are different views on the advantages of collaboration, with 'collaborative advantage' resulting from different organisations having a shared vision and achieving more together than they would do separately (Huxham, 2003, 1996; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Others suggest that collaboration can be about power seeking suggesting in-built competition in this process, while the 'realist' view suggests that collaboration is driven by external change or in the case of the public sector, mandated by government (Sullivan & Sketcher, 2002). As such, Degree Apprenticeships are part of the external changes impacting on UK Universities with a top down governmental policies drive to achieve high numbers of apprenticeships in a short time. The funding regime for universities might be said to be part of this context, with governmental intervention through the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy at a time of planned core government funding changes for higher education.

Positive factors supporting collaboration include preexisting relationships, shared understanding of aims, the building of trust, communication, and reconciling autonomy of participants with collective agency (Bryson et al., 2015). From a network perspective, formal authority or processes may signal rather than lead collaboration; social and cultural expectations, and any accompanying collective norms or sanctions that reinforce them, may be more effective in building relationships and governing exchanges (Jones et al., 1997). The supply chain literature offers much on the negotiated space between formal and informal understanding of collaborative relationships (see for instance, Poppo and Zenger, 2002). In the collaborations explored so far to form this award, both informal and formal activities have supported the process. In our study therefore we will explore the views of participants about their role in the process, the expression of values, trust and power in these relationships (using the approaches of Kuhn, 2008 and Burt 2000) and the way in which this played out in the development of this new curriculum.

Despite the possibility of 'collaborative advantage', other studies suggest difficulties in achieving this in education (Murray & Nallaya, 2015) and in the public sector (Dickinson & Glasby, 2010). The challenges and pitfalls may lead to collaborative inertia (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Huxham, 2003) to avoid them. The various conceptual frameworks of different professional groups has been observed to add to these difficulties:

> *"a particular professional group will apply a certain frame of reference... Professionals in other fields are likely to use different reference points, creating the potential for misunderstanding or disagreement"*. (Lupton et al 2001, 42)

Not unnaturally, the complexity of reconciling competing assumptions and interests can result in failure to deliver on the promises of collaborative effort such that despite the benefits of collaborative advantage, the practical difficulties and costs in doing so may even mean it is better to avoid collaboration altogether (Huxham, 2003).

The higher education and curriculum development context suggests that achieving partnership may be problematic. In Murray & Nallaya's examination of curriculum improvement via internal partnership

> *"First, obtaining collaboration between parties to the extent required sometimes proved difficult and the degree of such collaboration varied markedly between both*

> *programmes involved (2016, 1304). This difficult process of collaboration was attributed to historic and political reasons and there were differing levels of cooperation across those in the same faculty if at the same level, given variation in collaboration ..."*

between Course Coordinators working in the programme, a number of whom were against the idea ... *"from the outset"* (Murray & Nallaya (2916, 1304).

Academic staff are continually being asked to rethink their practices in response to seemingly ever-changing directives from senior management –directives frequently driven by policy change and other drivers at the national level, and which sometimes contradict previous such directives, thereby leading to a lack of enthusiasm combined with a degree of scepticism – even cynicism–on the part of those expected to implement the change. It also illustrates the need for a clear understanding on the part of all concerned of the nature of the change, its rationale and the central concepts underlying it. Without such understanding buy-in will surrender to scepticism and lack of engagement, and progress will be sporadic and disparate. Embedding academic literacies promises to help address a problem which is increasingly seen by academic staff as compromising the quality of what they are able to do and of their graduates. Yet even here, where academic staff are widely supportive of initiatives designed to improve this situation, securing their engagement to the extent needed to ensure positive change is difficult. It requires more than a good idea that is theoretically well informed; it also requires leadership (even charisma), good networking skills, an understanding of the local political climate, astuteness, the active support of senior management, a clear roll-out strategy, good channels of communication, clearly articulated consequences for failure to comply and a good deal of perseverance on the part of those driving change.

We will also explore whether shared meanings exist in terms of the way in which this Degree Apprenticeship is understood across different subject specialisms and different contexts.

Methodology

Aim
The aim of our research is to understand the nature of the collaborative innovation process which led to this new Management Degree Apprenticeship, from the perspectives of the participants in this new curriculum design.

Approach
Given that this is a perceptual study, qualitative approaches have been adopted to gain insights into individual views, as seen in Dey and Teasdale (2015)'s study of the development of individual constructs of the organisation. Similarly, Hardy et al (2003) emphasise the need for this approach in understanding alliances and partnerships. Here the perceptions of those involved are collected to identify the lived experience of culture and practice. Perceptual approaches include narrative and discourse approaches to interpret the stories told by participants to explain how things had happened and 'how things work around here.' Interpretivist routes were used for understanding the results of semi structured interviews with development partners.

Sample
This is necessarily a purposeful and unique sample capturing a particular set of perceptions of the award itself, the meanings associated with work-based learning and the views of

participants about the process. As such the study is not generalisable, nor is it intended to be. It should, however, provide rich insights for fellow academics on the nature and challenges of collaboration and the ways in which this degree apprenticeship and work-based learning are constructed individually and collectively. An overview of the sample is seen at Table 1

Table 1 Participant Information

Partner Type	No. of Interviews
External	3
Internal - Core Services	3
Internal - Faculty A	6
Internal - Faculty B	1
Internal - Faculty C	3
Total	**16**

Method

This research project explored collaboration from an 'insider's' viewpoint (Savage 2006, 385) and therefore it was located in an interpretivist philosophical tradition, with interview content seen as reflections of the sense making and realities of those being studied (Schwandt 1994, 118). This necessitated the use of qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. The approach used semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Data capture was carried out on an individual basis with face-to-face or telephone recorded interviews to suit the needs of the participants. Following the interviews, and the transcription of discussions, follow up emails confirmed content, raised any queries etc. Manual thematic analysis was then conducted, together with the use of software as appropriate to understand what was said and what was not said in these interviews. As a first step interviews were reviewed with reference to the general research themes, then were revisited for discussion or examples outside these four themes.

The research themes were introduced as topics to query
(1) How has the collaborative process supported innovations in curriculum design?
(2) How have the different partners perceived their shaping of the new award and how do they see other partners?
(3) In developing the programme how have the informal and formal aspects of the collaboration worked?
(4) In developing the programme how have ideas about work-based learning coalesced? Or are there differences in the meaning attributed to this term?

These themes followed literature review. The separation of formal and informal in the collaboration process is informed by previous curriculum development in higher education and the need for extra measures to underpin formal processes (Murray & Nallaya, 2016). Participants were asked about previous relationships with internal or external partners given that pre-existing relationships are a positive factor in collaboration (Bryson et al, 2015).

Results

The results are discussed in five subsections. The first four focus on the research themes, listed below, while the fifth section explores other insights emerging from the study.

(1) How has the collaborative process supported innovations in curriculum design?
(2) How have the different partners perceived their shaping of the new award and how do they see other partners?
(3) In developing the programme how have the informal and formal aspects of the collaboration worked?
(4) In developing the programme how have ideas about work-based learning coalesced? Or are there differences in the meaning attributed to this term?
(5) Other

1. How has the collaborative process supported innovations in curriculum design?

The participants all agreed that the collaboration had been fundamental to curriculum innovation and that having validated the course was just the beginning, innovation needed to continue. As the Course tutors commented:

"In the very early stages when we were looking at course development and course structure .. with the other course tutors and quite a few members within the team to take the existing Professional body structure to the apprenticeship and actually working with a lot of the (subject specialists) "

> *"Before, I didn't know the other course tutors, we were thrust together really ... our first bringing together of the wider team was really to do the bureaucracy of the event for the validation of the degree" ....*

> *"So that is how we got together .... and that is still developing really, we are still settling down and we are still writing one of the units now so I have helped coordinate colleagues down my end into teams, cross-faculty teams to develop the units – which is new, really new, and it is different and it is really the right thing to do and I am really enjoying it..."*
> *"working together has been really good because we share information and ...are building something as part of this apprenticeship degree ...."*

Some aspects had led to an innovation in how things were done but also participants recognized the continuous nature of collaborative innovation.

> *" the collaborative nature of working together with the apprenticeship team generally is rewarding in itself because you are meeting different people within quite a large institution (which can otherwise be quite isolating in our teams and faculties)".*

> *"Working with the other course tutors has been critical to the course development... it is a continuous process and .... it is always going to be evolving and changing even though we have got the standard ...., the way we deliver it, who delivers it, the structure in terms of the block release and day release* (will be determined)*, through dialogue .. It is going to evolve and change and we are going to be open to that to the point where we might even change it the next week..."*

Similarly this was seen as a learning process, with ideas taken forward for formal processes elsewhere. Given that three faculties and different departments involved in this process, different approaches to teaching and to stages of learning during a degree became evident during discussions. To overcome this, the team agreed to meet to agree the 'Golden Rules' for how things would happen.

> *"... the idea is that instead of saying 'this is the staff handbook' and 'this is what you should be doing', we actually agreed what the right communication is with the student, as a basis for discussion about how we do things".*

In this way, it was felt, although departments and faculties might teach in different ways, the team were able to share what they normally did and come up with a route to suits everyone.

> *" ....ideas then evolve because we can learn from what we and other partners do ... so the Golden Rules is a way of cementing our collaboration".* Despite this, it was felt that this had not compromised core principles as *"hopefully everyone has agreed and certainly if they haven't then they have discussed them and understand the importance of the*m"

The collaborative process was also valued for the new ideas flowing into all aspects of how the degree was delivered. One course tutor was enthusiastic about "*getting other people's views, bouncing stuff off each other and having a range of people with a range of experiences in the room".* He felt this had been really beneficial because it made them rethink each stage of the student experience. Even induction was developed jointly to achieve "*something a bit zowy and a bit wow – not a regular induction"* with new and different people brought in to share that experience.

In summary, collaboration had been seen as an innovation in itself and had led to innovation not only in the design of the new award but also in taking ideas back into exiting curriculum. It would be interesting to track these innovations and how they become embedded in "what we do normally"

2. How have the different partners perceived their shaping of the new award and how do they see other partners?
There was a clear sense of unity of purpose identified across partners, as seen in the comment made by one of the Quality Officers.

> "*We have had faculties"* .. working together .. *"who view this as strategically very important as our own does, and I have always felt that .. in the background behind the people who are representing those faculties on the team, were others saying to them "yes this is good we will support you" (*whereas*) "we could have been with faculties who were a bit cold"*

The different partners were a mixture of internal and external participants. Those receiving most mentions and seen as critical to success were the Overall Project Manager and the course coordinators, While collaboration and roles across the team were seen as important, all saw the role of the project manager as the most important in driving the project, supporting the collaboration and making things happen.   The internal partners, including both administrative and academic staff, attributed the success of the project to the collaboration and communication she promoted.   In addition, the professional body

commented on the supportive structure at the university, the Apprenticeships Unit, as signalling the seriousness of institution about these new awards. This was due to "smooth administrative support" where "you can ring and quickly get a reply".

Individual partners identified where they had input into the process, with quality officers explaining their roles in the success of the validation process and in the careful mapping of course content and learning outcomes to match the content of the professional award. Many commented on the mapping process with the Professional body Standards to Make sure everyone was 'on the same page' as in this typical comment:

> "*making sure that we were all on the same page was important... it wasn't just a case of going to the Professional body and saying "Yeah we will teach that", we had to really look very closely at the wording and then they sent us a critique of what we had done – yes it matches this unit, not sure, you need to clarify this, and you know that is a very formal professional relationship and it was very important...*"

Commenting on the programme design process, an administrator explained that it began with a review of existing undergraduate management degrees to see which elements met Professional body assessment plan requirements but this *"allowed 3 faculties to explain how they delivered certain areas of knowledge and skills so it brought understanding and depth into curriculum design and it challenged each faculty to think about their own delivery"*. The resulting curriculum resulted from "a process of negotiation to develop an overall framework of 12 units of the degree over 4 years".

In summary, both internal and external partners saw the design stage as a valuable experience which had bridged barriers. Many felt they had led on the same aspects, which has not proved to be a problem in the design stage but may cause problems in the delivery stage, but more research is needed to determined how individual and collective territories are resolved.

3. In developing the programme how have the informal and formal aspects of the collaboration worked?
All partners recognised both informal and formal aspects of collaboration over the course development period. Those more embedded in university systems felt thought, that this was "the informal end of formal" but that this had been a good thing, since the process of meetings and communication needed to break down barriers and to make explicit exactly how the new award would work. In addition to formal internal processes to achieve validation, this also included external processes linked to working with the professional bodies, the governmental funding body and the Trailblazer group to form the standard on which the award was based. These external processes were not evident to most partners, (employers and university team) who focused instead on validation as formal structures requiring responses in particular ways, formats and timeframes.

Validation in such a short time with the extra scrutiny of the first management degree apprenticeship was seen as a major achievement for the team. One course tutor gave " credit to the team and the cohesiveness of the team" in doing so. Commitment to achieve this was signalled by very good attendance at the frequent meetings leading up to the validation panel, supported by regular informal updates and regular formal meetings and updates and spurred by formal deadlines within the institution itself, not only "within individual faculties but then also from the cross collaboration perspective". Hence communication was indentured by all partners as critical to content development and to meeting the formalities of frameworks , standards and validation so".

Despite the success of communication and collaboration in delivering validation on time and to a high standard, it was clear to Quality Officers and course tutors alike that "innovation in the delivery of the degree posed challenges" for central quality bodies within the university. While these bodies necessarily took a reactive stance normally in focus groups on compliance with national government and professional body quality standards, this had led them to be "a bit more proactive rather than reactive to ...a developing programme" which might prove a useful learning experience for those bodies with future awards to "allow people a little bit more development room and a little bit more autonomy because academics should be given quite a lot more autonomy". Although while perhaps academics should not be given "not too much autonomy .. when there are control mechanisms in place" still for this groundbreaking initiative, "we need to continue to innovate and ... to be proactive and a bit more restrictive on (the implementation of full formal) process, where possible."

In summary, the design process has been characterised by regular communication, both formal and informal which has been highly valued by all partners. The formal processes of validation and what are seen as potentially rigid internal structures and processes have not proved to be a barrier in partner views but both internal and external partners felt they would benefit from change to allow greater flexibility for more rapid response to these new awards and to other curriculum developments.

4. In developing the programme how have ideas about work-based learning coalesced? Or are there differences in the meaning attributed to this term?
Smith and Worsfold (2015, 22) suggest that curriculum design intended to integrate theory with workplace practices may be termed Work-Integrated Learning. With its "close integration of university study and professional or workplace practice", this curriculum promotes "application of disciplinary knowledge learned at university to real-world work contexts". Asking for definitions of apprenticeships and discussing work-based learning with programme partners showed broad understanding of Smith and Worsfold's view but there was variation.

Course tutors emphasised that "work and the education are inter-linked, co-dependent" and that this integration of work and university was the core element. "*it is a whole delivery of learning, there is a job and there is training and ... a degree and that degree is contextualising its learning to the workplace*" but that the degree element within this programme was still very much applied management education. This therefore required "thinking. about the theoretical constructs that can be applied and ... current workplace practice". This was also linked to apprentices redefining themselves through the process by going through an "identity reframe" while the degree also reframed apprenticeships - work based learning may be seen as being at a lower level of achievement "but the degree apprenticeship has re-calibrated that". This idea of changing identity was articulated by other internal staff who saw the apprenticeship as being "bigger than the university experience, bigger than the employment experience; it is a fusion of education and work place and work-based learning".. While there was "the employment context for the apprentice and .... the student context for the apprentice ..... " It might even be that in the fusion of those two things, "a different type of emerging professional who might connect more easily" might result.

While the Apprenticeship Unit defined these as "jobs with training" employers suggested that while apprenticeships were basically "earning while you are learning" they stressed the dual benefits of degree completion while being fully employed by an organisation, so that "you

come out at the end of your time on the degree with a full business degree, a level 5 Professional body qualification and also a chartered manager at the end of your 4 years". Further, employers stressed that the important thing is the "integration between the learning and the work." Administrators described it as similar to a part-time degree, but that unlike a usual part-time degree which might be disconnected from work, the degree apprenticeship "is formally embedded in everything" the apprentice does at work.   These sit very much within the work-integrated rather than work-based learnt approach.

In summary, at this stage, definitions differed in content and emphasis, but this had not proved to be a barrier but had allowed fluid understanding of the award through the design process. This may prove problematic at the delivery stage but further research will help to explore this.

5. Other
One potential issue prior to the study was whether the new qualification would be seen as equally valuable by all partners , given research by Isopahkala-Bouret (2015) showing that traditional qualifications were more highly valued than newer awards within universities and externally.. As suggested above, this was a highly motivated and positive team, despite disparate interests, varying functions, departments and faculties and accompanying politics. The process of collaboration, negotiation and innovation had added value to the resulting product from their perspective. In the words of the course tutor above, the qualification is "new, really new, and different and it is really the right thing to do". This enthusiasm was evident across from both internal and external partners. Hence the award was seen as innovative by all partners, internal and external, and variously as 'groundbreaking' and 'cutting edge'.

Another aspect we explored as part of data collection was previous experience of working together and previous relationships given that Bryson et al (2015) suggest these contribute to easier collaboration. This was true in a few cases. One had been involved in a team across two faculties to achieve a successful application for an international accreditation, led by the same project manager leading Degree Apprenticeships. In this previous experience, before the international accreditation the departments had been "separate worlds" - hence applying for the international accreditation "did an amazing job for us and brought the faculties together". This previous experience was felt to be an excellent example of best practice working and that was the expectation carried forward, that this new collaboration would be led in the same way.

Discussion
The new Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship meets an acknowledged gap in accrediting higher-level skills and knowledge through a work-integrated learning process through an emphasis on negotiated work projects which both demonstrate learning and form part of learning (Eraut et al, 2005). This is a new industry-driven and government-supported approach for management education. It is a hybrid award, bringing honours' level education into the workplace context through the apprenticeship route as seen in Appendix A. This paper has focused on the development of that award, from the perspective of innovation through collaboration.

Six and Skinner (2010) remind us that organisations are collections of individuals and that organisational politics and their management are important in supporting positive work relationships. Here a large organisation brought together disparate voices to develop an award, with new relationships forming - as well as the process building on existing

relationships. This was potentially risky for the organisation as an exercise given other experience (Murray & Nallaya, 2015), but especially so given time constraints from first discussions to proposed launch and a need to validate the award. This does also not reflect reputational risk given high expectations of external partners, employers, professional body and founders.

Despite this, relationships flourished across functional, subject and geographic barriers. Innovation evolved from collaboration, with the development of separate sector specific pathways as a direct result of the collaborative discussions, led by those between faculty course coordinators, to "make sense" of the new award. This innovation flowed into other programmes, with best practice (such as the Golden Rules meeting and guidelines) written up by Quality Administrators to be shared and embedded in other award programmes. The key themes echo to some extent the findings of Bryson et al (2015), who suggested that collaboration us supported by pre-existing relationships, shared understanding of aims, communication, building trust and reconciling autonomy.

Here there were only a few pre-existing relationships, but the shared aims and goals were evident, with communication and trust building recognised as key parts of the process by all partners in what was seen as an exciting and innovative step away from more traditional ways of working within the university. Autonomy has so far been shared, but all course tutors claim key aspects of award development. This will be something to re-examine in future research to see how the collegiality identified so far plays out in delivery.

To summarize findings, the innovative design process offers insights into how universities can work across faculties to achieve common goals, largely bearing out the findings of Bryson et al (2015). The important difference here is that the cohesion in collaboration, the 'glue' bringing people together and sustaining them was defined as two things.

- The first was the common belief that this was of simultaneously of high worth, that it was "the right thing to do" and that it was challenging, exciting and innovative.
- The second was the trust and collaboration fostered by and embedded in key people within the programme, notably the Project Manager and the course coordinators developing content.

The study adds to existing theory on collaboration and on curriculum design. It also brings fresh insights to innovation literature, via collaborative advantage. Innovation is seen in designing a programme in negotiation with a professional body and employers in such an open way, the study therefore gives insights into how universities can work more effectively with external organisations. With the launch of the award in September 2016, the commonalities of curriculum practice and the strength of the partnership will be tested, but the principles established and the relationships embarked upon may be a major benefit of the adoption of this curriculum. Further research is indicated to explore the evolution of this partnership, the application of learning within the award and the "emerging professional" who completes the degree apprenticeship.

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Figure 1