

**From the Office of the Minister**  
Diane Dodds MLA



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**Our Ref:** CORR-4425-2020

17 September 2020

Dear Ciaran,

**TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ARCHITECTS - APPRENTICESHIP CHALLENGE FUND**

Thank you for your email of 4th September 2020 in which you ask to meet to discuss how the Apprenticeship Challenge fund might be used to help provide additional routes for training to become an architect in Northern Ireland.

As you suggest, full time undergraduate study (including work placement) is outside the scope of apprenticeships. In this context, responsibility for work placements will continue to rest with universities working in partnerships with employers.

The purpose of the Apprenticeship Recovery Package is to minimise apprenticeship job losses and to maintain and grow the supply of apprenticeship opportunities. The Challenge Fund will seek to encourage the development of new, innovative apprenticeship models and pathways, to promote collaboration and increase employer confidence to engage with the apprenticeship system to achieve the overall aim of maintaining the skills pipeline and preventing short term economic shock resulting in long term damage to businesses / sectors.

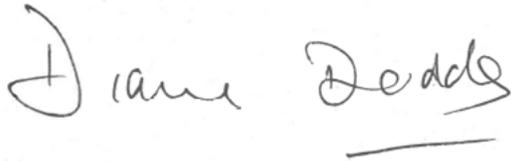
I can confirm that further details on the Apprenticeship Challenge Fund will be released in the coming weeks and there will be an opportunity for all interested

parties to consider making an application to the fund to address some of the barriers faced by their sector.

My Officials would be happy to meet with you to discuss this in further detail and explore how and if my Department could assist in providing additional routes for training future architects.

I would be grateful if you would please contact Jim Wilkinson [jimwilkinson@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:jimwilkinson@economy-ni.gov.uk) to arrange a suitable date and time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Dodds". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature, there is a horizontal line.

**DIANE DODDS MLA**  
**Minister for the Economy**