

University of West London

Higher education institution

Inspection dates		10–13 December 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding - 1
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for students		Outstanding - 1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding - 1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding - 1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is outstanding because:

- Further education (FE) students demonstrate very high professional standards in their practical work at the university; a high proportion achieves exceptionally well, both in the university and on workplace study programmes and apprenticeships.
- Students receive outstanding initial advice and guidance; staff place them on the most appropriate programmes, enabling them to make very good progress relative to their starting points.
- Programmes prepare students exceptionally well for progression to the next level of study or to employment.
- Staff have a very broad range of relevant professional, commercial and industrial experience; they promote an exceptionally strong work ethic and establish extremely high expectations of students.
- Assessment is rigorous and relevant to current industry trends, and regularly incorporates inputs from industry leaders working alongside university staff.
- The university has outstandingly strong links with world-renowned employers and associations across the catering and hospitality industry which help ensure students prepare very well for employment.
- The university supports local, regional and national priorities for economic growth, and actively recruits and supports students from areas of social and economic disadvantage.
- Teachers actively promote equality and diversity and the development of students' English, mathematics and functional skills.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of teaching and learning further by:
 - refining the use of questioning techniques and group tasks in theory lessons to ensure that staff stretch and challenge the most able students more
 - sharing best practice in individual target setting in practical lessons
 - ensuring all teachers correct spelling and grammar consistently in written work.
- Ensure that lesson observations and course reviews focus more on the impact of activities on students' learning and progress.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
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- Outcomes for students are outstanding. Students achieve exceptionally well, both on university-based courses and on workplace study programmes and apprenticeships. On the majority of courses, the proportion of students successfully achieving their qualifications is well above the national average and continues to improve from previous years. The high proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their qualifications all do so in a timely manner.
- The university recruits students with a broad cross-section of previous academic attainment, some of whom have achieved comparatively low, or even no, significant prior qualifications. Teachers set ambitious targets and ensure that all students receive suitable individual and group support and intervention to enable them to progress very well, relative to their starting points.
- No significant differences exist in the achievement or progression of different groups of students, irrespective of gender, age or ethnicity. The various university-based and workplace programmes prepare students exceptionally well for progression to further or higher education or to employment. Most students successfully progress on to the next level of study or to employment, frequently with highly prestigious local or London-based employers.
- All staff involved in teaching and assessing students have a very broad range of relevant professional, commercial and industrial experience. This adds significantly to the strong focus on preparing students for the world of work. Staff promote an exceptionally strong work ethic. Staff establish extremely high expectations for students for attendance, punctuality, hygiene, health and safety, professional appearance, customer service and behaviour. Students consistently meet the standards that staff expect.
- Students demonstrate extremely high standards in their practical work. For example, in one session they produced innovative and creative tapas dishes as part of a competition task. Students work very well in teams and demonstrate high levels of problem-solving skills. For example, a foundation level group collaborated very well when making hot and cold canapés, producing a very high quality finished product. Students regularly have the opportunity to prepare and serve freshly prepared dinners to over 100 customers in a realistic commercial environment.
- The university has outstandingly strong links with world-renowned London hotels and other high-quality employers and associations across the catering and hospitality industry. These companies frequently provide unparalleled opportunities for many students; they strongly endorse the outstanding quality of work within the university in training and preparing students for employment. A number of famous celebrity chefs also endorse the work of the university and play an active role in motivating, supporting and encouraging students to succeed.
- Students often have the opportunity to compete in national culinary competitions, where they frequently achieve recognition for the high quality of their work. The university also runs an

annual awards event, which attracts a high level of industry involvement and sponsorship. This helps raise aspirations and provides the opportunity for the university to celebrate and reward the achievements of the very best students.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Lessons are lively, interesting, purposeful, and strongly focus on developing employability skills. Students are very enthusiastic; they enjoy their learning and make rapid progress. As a result, students achieve very high success rates and most successfully progress to further study or employment.
- Learning is highly effective. Lessons focus strongly on developing professional practice, with well-planned, stimulating and exciting activities that enthuse and energise students. Teachers are passionate and highly experienced; they use a wide variety of teaching methods and engender self-confidence by building trust and cooperation among their students. Workplace assessors question apprentices skilfully in order to check their knowledge and understanding and develop their on-the-job knowledge. For example, the renowned butler programme developed by the university with a very prestigious employer, and delivered in partnership with a top London hotel, allows students to develop their butlery skills, understanding and ambitions, and make outstanding progress.
- In a small minority of theory lessons, the questioning strategies and group activity that staff use do not always encourage all students to participate fully. As a result, these lessons do not always sufficiently stretch and challenge the most able students.
- Students have access to excellent, industry-standard kitchen and restaurant facilities. Students operate under realistic commercial pressure, servicing the busy university restaurants and at prestigious external venues and events.
- The planning of assessment is thorough and relevant to current industry trends. Students also benefit from the involvement of industry leaders who regularly work alongside university staff to assess students' work. Teachers and students use digital technology exceptionally well to support and record assessments. For example, students use mobile technology to log evaluations from practical sessions, set targets within their learning plans, record the finished dishes and the formal evaluations from teachers.
- Students receive very detailed feedback from staff which clearly identifies what they achieve, as well as providing constructive guidance on how to continue improving their work. Feedback between assessors, apprentices and their employers is excellent at identifying each learner's progress within the workplace and how this can help tailor further training.
- Partnership working is outstanding. Collaboration with prestigious organisations in the food industry regularly exposes students to contemporary food and drink trends. In addition, internationally renowned industry leaders regularly provide master classes, technical and produce demonstrations, which further enhance learners' insight and understanding. Students have excellent opportunities to participate in wide-ranging field visits and trips. All of these initiatives contribute to raising aspirations and improving students' knowledge.
- Initial advice and guidance are outstanding. Prior to enrolling at the university, many students benefit from attending the junior chefs academy on Saturdays while still at school, giving them opportunities to experience the catering industry and the university before they start. This also enables teachers to assess the potential of prospective students before they apply. For those learners considering a work-based route, advisers match apprentices very well to prospective employers. All apprentices undertake trial periods with employers to ensure they are in the right environment to match their aspirations. Careers advice, guidance and support to help students progress are excellent.
- Support for students is outstanding. The use of higher education students to act as mentors is particularly effective at providing support for full-time students in practical sessions. Staff

support apprentices very well and successfully balance a focus on welfare and well-being with the high expectations that employers expect at the very prestigious hotels and restaurants.

- Students make very good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. Staff actively promote the development of technical language and verbal communication skills, and lessons contain many opportunities for students to practise these skills. For example, students understand the yield from a roast turkey to calculate portion control, and they learn about food unit costing and volumes. In a minority of cases, teachers fail to correct spelling and grammar in written work.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. Students frequently identify adaptations to recipes and ingredients to address cultural influences, dietary and allergy requirements. They regularly discuss and consider the sustainable and ethical implications of particular ingredients.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Senior managers and governors have a very clear vision and strategy for the further education (FE) provision in culinary arts. Although the FE provision is small in relation to the rest of the university provision, it is central to the university's strategic aims to provide high quality, vocationally-relevant education and training, which both meet industry needs and enable students to progress to higher-level study, specialist training and employment. Promoting social inclusion, social mobility and supporting local, regional and national economic growth are at the heart of the university's strategic planning.
- The university's outstanding partnerships with an extensive range of large and small employers and businesses ensure that the provision meets the skills required in the industry. University managers make excellent use of their regular engagement with professional bodies and current labour market information to identify skills needs and shortages. The university maximises the benefits of its location near Heathrow to develop productive partnerships in the hospitality industry across food retail, manufacturing, distribution, and contract catering, as well as working with prestigious hotels and restaurants in Central London.
- Strong partnerships with local schools create good progression opportunities for young people in the locality. For example, of the 170 young people who attend the junior chef academy each year, around two thirds progress to FE culinary arts courses in the university. The university's work with a prison-based charity to develop appropriate hospitality qualifications is helping to rehabilitate offenders and support them into employment.
- Students have appropriate opportunities to gain functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Plans are in place to offer GCSE courses, in partnership with a local college, from September 2014.
- The university promotes a culture of high expectations for staff and students. Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning is central to the university's pursuit of excellence. A comprehensive system of internal lesson observations provides a clear analysis of strengths and areas for development in teaching and learning. However, some prompts for observers focus too much on whether specific activities are taking place in lessons, rather than on evaluating the effectiveness of these activities in supporting good learning and progress, and their impact on learners.
- Managers make good use of the findings from lesson observations to provide a well-considered and targeted programme of continuing professional development for teachers. The university supports staff to study for higher-level degrees or professional qualifications, and they benefit from vocationally-relevant research projects carried out within the university. Opportunities for peer observation and sharing best practice also contribute to improvements in teaching and learning. Findings from lesson observations inform annual staff appraisals, and the university has thorough processes to manage any underperformance.
- Comprehensive systems are in place to monitor the quality of the provision. The continuous quality improvement group and the FE board carefully monitor all aspects of provision, including

students' achievement, progression, the quality of teaching and learning, and progress on actions identified for improvement. Course reviews clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement in student achievement and progression, and teaching, learning and assessment. However, they do not always evaluate fully the impact of the provision on students' learning and progress. The FE board and governors scrutinise the FE self-assessment report carefully. The university makes very good use of feedback from students, parents and employers to improve provision further.

- The promotion of equality and diversity and social inclusion is central to all the university's work. Teachers make excellent use of naturally occurring opportunities through the curriculum to develop and enhance students' awareness of different cultures and cuisines. Students indicate that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Students from very diverse social and ethnic backgrounds work harmoniously together. The university monitors student and staff recruitment carefully to ensure this reflects the local population in terms of gender and ethnicity. Despite some recent improvements, particularly in the recruitment of female governors, the governing body does not yet fully reflect the student or staff population.
- The university meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students. All teachers and support staff who work directly with students aged under 18, or who visit local schools, have undergone appropriate vetting. All staff and governors receive suitable training and fulfil legislative requirements on health and safety and safeguarding. Students feel very safe on the campus and have access to a wide range of support services to ensure their well-being.
- Teachers promote safe working practices actively in kitchens and classrooms, with a strong focus, for example, on the correct use of equipment and safe storage of knives.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

University of West London				
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-19 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1	1
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1	1	1	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Hospitality and catering	1

Provider details

University of West London	
Type of provider	Higher education institution
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 201
	Part-time: 644
Principal/CEO	Professor Peter John, Vice-Chancellor
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Website address	www.uwl.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of students (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	41	2	27	1	31	9	-	-
Part-time	-	18	-	66	3	170	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	19	22	19	15				
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							

Contextual information

The University of West London was renamed in 2011, following merger and de-merger of several colleges and universities over the previous several decades. It provides a broad range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, runs a weekend junior academy for school children and also offers further education provision in hospitality and culinary arts. Teachers deliver all classroom-based provision at the Ealing campus. In addition, students are undertaking workplace programmes and apprenticeships with employers in and around London.

Ealing is well placed to service the very high density of hospitality and tourism jobs in the area, being within easy reach of Heathrow airport and Central London. The university's education and training in hospitality catering therefore respond well to local employment needs as well as the national demand to increase the number of qualified employees in these skill areas. A comparatively high proportion of students are of minority ethnic heritage, broadly in line with the regional population.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Peter Nelson HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the field leader for culinary arts as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors also used data on students' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the further education provision at the provider.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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