

E.ON UK Engineering Academy

Employer

Inspection dates		20 – 23 January 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- apprentices' success rates are too variable in recent years and are not consistently good
- apprentices do not develop their English skills well enough
- trainers do not plan and deliver training sessions well enough to meet the diverse needs and abilities of apprentices, or to provide a range of challenging activities that engage all apprentices
- review of the subcontractor's performance does not enable managers to take actions to improve poor performance quickly enough
- observations of teaching, learning and assessment do not accurately evaluate learning, and staff development plans do not support trainers to improve their practice sufficiently
- managers do not evaluate the impact of their actions on apprentices' learning and progress accurately and as a result, the self-assessment report is inaccurate.

This provider has the following strengths:

- apprentices develop good technical and workplace skills
- apprentices benefit from supportive and committed employers
- trainers have high levels of technical expertise and industry experience
- trainers and employers provide apprentices with good careers information, advice and guidance
- leaders and managers plan the curriculum of apprenticeship provision very well to meet the skills needs of national power industry employers and apprentices' job roles
- managers and staff take good actions to safeguard all apprentices.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of learners who achieve their apprenticeship by continuing to monitor closely the progress of apprentices and take swift action to support those at risk of leaving the programme early.
- As a priority, ensure that trainers have updates in teaching and learning, English, and equality and diversity so that their skills and confidence increase. Monitor the development of apprentices' English skills through lesson observations.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that trainers plan lessons that take account of the individual needs and abilities of apprentices; ensure they provide a varied range of activities and learning resources to motivate, challenge and engage apprentices in learning.
- Implement a rigorous performance review of the subcontracted technical certificate to ensure that the quality of provision improves. Ensure that managers act promptly to rectify issues raised through observation or from apprentices' feedback.
- Improve the rigour of the lesson observation process so that it identifies more clearly the impact that teaching and assessment activities have on learning and progress; implement sharply-focused action plans for improvement.
- Ensure that staff and managers take into account all information on apprentices' performance, including data on variations in performance between different groups, as well as the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to arrive at an accurate self-assessment report.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Advanced apprenticeships make up the whole of the funded provision in the engineering academy (the Academy). Employers and apprentices choose from one of four engineering pathways including electrical, electro-technical, mechanical or electrical control and instrumentation. A greater proportion of the Academy's work is providing non-funded specialist courses for the power industry. Of the current apprentices E.ON employs approximately one-fifth and other power industry companies employ the remainder.
- Apprentices' success rates are too variable in recent years and require improvement. They improved in 2012/13 to good but declined significantly in 2013/14 to slightly above those of similar groups nationally. Provider data indicate that apprentices at the time of the inspection are making good progress and within planned end dates. Retention in the current year is good.
- The use of data to identify variations in the performance of different groups of apprentices requires improvement. Managers do not routinely analyse data on apprentices' achievement to identify variations in the performance of different groups of learners or to narrow achievement gaps.
- Apprentices increase their mathematical skills appropriately through their engineering programme. Trainers ensure that apprentices extend their skills sufficiently to complete their qualifications.

- The development of apprentices' English skills is poor. The sole subcontractor and the Academy's trainers do not provide effective opportunities for apprentices to develop and extend their written English and communication skills within the context of engineering.
- Apprentices work in a variety of roles in high quality power industry settings and benefit from supportive and committed employers. They quickly develop competent vocational skills, a strong awareness of safety and technical knowledge that enables them to undertake maintenance tasks unsupervised such as low voltage circuit breakers and gas turbines. They gain additional skills in basic first aid, scaffolding, manual lifting and handling and fabrication and welding. They develop positive attitudes to work, grow in confidence and have the ability to take responsibility for ensuring their assessment targets are completed.
- Managers and trainers actively promote progression opportunities to higher level qualifications for E.ON's employees. In the last three years, nineteen apprentices have progressed through one or more levels following the completion of their programme.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require further improvement, including the subcontracted technical certificate; the variable success rates and the poor development of apprentices' English skills reflect this. Staff have high expectations of apprentices' understanding of health and safety standards and their development of safe working practices. They work effectively with local, regional and national power sector employers to plan training programmes with specific units that closely match the skills needs of both employers and apprentices.
- A rigorous initial selection process involves a variety of testing stages when apprentices join the engineering academy. This includes practical activities such as hand tool identification, a technical drawing exercise, as well as an assessment of English and mathematics,. However, trainers do not use the results of initial assessment sufficiently well to develop individual learning plans, to set challenging targets or to plan learning.
- Too many lessons are trainer-led and do not meet apprentices' individual needs; they rely too much on the completion of workbooks and hand-outs. Lesson planning and delivery do not take account of the differing abilities and needs of apprentices. The pace of lessons is too slow and all apprentices complete the same activities.
- Learning methods lack the variety to engage apprentices actively or support their development of independent learning skills. Science and engineering subjects, particularly in the technical certificate, lack any form of discovery or exploratory activities and fail to stimulate learning. Limited use is made of visual resources including models, videos, or the internet. In one lesson, apprentices completed worksheet problems on momentum and collisions rather than taking an active part in practical or simulated experiments.
- Assessment practices are effective. Assessors visit apprentices frequently and regularly, monitoring their progress towards completion of their qualification effectively. A flexible approach enables apprentices to organise assessment to suit their work patterns and assessment opportunities. A minority of targets set during progress reviews are not sufficiently specific or challenging. Trainers give clear written and verbal feedback to apprentices that enable them to understand how to improve their work.
- The accommodation and practical resources in the engineering academy are good. Trainers use their high levels of technical expertise effectively to help apprentices develop competent working practices and skills that meet their job needs. Apprentices develop good technical skills in the use of industry-standard equipment such as maintaining and repairing motors, pumps and high and low voltage circuit breakers. The development of additional knowledge to support the workplace skills and NVQ assessment is good. For example, in an observed session on gas

analysers, apprentices developed good maintenance and testing skills and could explain underlying principles, as well as safe working with gas supplies.

- The arrangements to ensure that apprentices make good progress in developing their mathematical skills are adequate. Mathematical skills are implicit in engineering studies so all apprentices have the opportunity to develop and extend their skills in maths sufficiently to complete their advanced qualification. However, in a minority of lessons there is insufficient assessment and reinforcement of apprentices' ability to calculate equations, such as potential differences in oxygen measurement or interpreting information on graphs.
- The development of apprentices' English skills is poor. Trainers and assessors are not sufficiently qualified in functional skills to support and advise apprentices effectively, nor do they generally see it as their responsibility. Trainers do not routinely correct apprentices' use of English in their written work or spelling and grammar errors. Insufficient planned opportunities are available for apprentices to develop their communication skills. Apprentices are not encouraged to develop their own record of complex terminology and technical spellings.
- The quality of information, advice and guidance provided for apprentices is good. At entry, apprentices get clear information about their programme requirements; in addition they are referred to sources of further information. Trainers and employers provide specific career and progression information; exit reviews ensure that apprentices are clear on their destination opportunities. Apprentices employed by E.ON are encouraged and supported to gain professional registration and membership of relevant professional bodies.
- Staff ensure that apprentices understand the importance of respect for others through the Academy's behaviour contract. Staff and apprentices work together very effectively to identify and resolve cases of bullying. However, learning activities do not plan sufficiently well enough to take account of the diverse needs of individual apprentices. Trainers do not help apprentices understand how current themes and topical issues relate to them as individuals. During the review process, assessors do not use the bank of mandatory questions effectively to explore the complexity of equality in the workplace.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and improve outcomes for apprentices. An effective strategic direction is being implemented well to develop the engineering academy provision in line with the changing needs of the power industry. Apprentices develop good technical skills to meet the needs of the power industry. However, the strategy for the monitoring and continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment is not effective. The use of data to monitor the provision is developing appropriately.
- Performance management and staff development have not been sufficiently effective in improving the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teaching and learning observations have not been accurate enough to improve the quality of trainers' teaching and their understanding of learning, as the focus is not sufficiently on apprentices' learning and progress. Trainers and assessors have appropriate engineering qualifications and experience; they benefit from a wide range of development opportunities that enhance their technical competence, develop their health and safety practice and use of equipment. However, managers do not prioritise sufficiently the need to update trainers' basic teaching qualifications, the importance and teaching of functional skills and understanding of equality and diversity in the workplace.
- Management of the performance of the subcontractor lacks rigour. Contract management has focused on gaining feedback from apprentices in a review meeting. The feedback from apprentices is very clear on aspects of their training requiring improvement. However, changes

in subcontractor staff have hindered a consistent approach to improving the provision. In some instances, actions to improve aspects of teaching, learning and assessment are not resolved sufficiently quickly, such as the development of an assessment framework that took more than a year to complete. Very recently, the training delivery manager has established a more formal contract review to improve the oversight of this area. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of the change.

- The strategy for the development of apprentices' written English and communication skills requires improvement. Trainers lack the training and confidence they need to ensure that effectively planned opportunities in vocational learning supports and extends apprentices' English skills across all aspects of the provision.
- Leaders and managers use management information, knowledge and links with the power industry very well to develop learning programmes to meet current and future power industry priorities. The range and level of programmes meet those needs and interests well in terms of specific technical skills to meet apprentices' job roles.
- Managers have not evaluated the quality of the apprenticeship provision accurately and as a result, the self-assessment report is not fully accurate. The report recognises some of the key areas for improvement in the provision but does not consider sufficiently the impact of these on the apprentices' experience and skills development. Trainers and assessors contribute well to the self-assessment process. Managers make good use of feedback from apprentices and employers to inform self-assessment and improvement strategies.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in the wider E.ON business is effective, but it is less effective in the engineering academy's apprenticeship provision. Apprentices receive clear information at induction to raise their awareness of equality and diversity issues but reinforcement varies across all aspects of the programme.
- Safeguarding of apprentices is good; detailed policies and processes for safeguarding apprentices are in place and implemented effectively. Managers, staff and most apprentices take quick action where bullying or other incidents affecting other learners occur. Safeguarding champions are in place and active in identifying and monitoring welfare issues. An electronic tracker is used very well to record and monitor incidents, including bullying. Engineering academy staff promote safe working and environment practices very well.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**E.ON UK Engineering Academy**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3						3		
Outcomes for learners	3						3		
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3						3		
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3						3		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	3

Type of provider	Employer								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	81								
Head of the Engineering Academy	Mr David Hughes								
Date of previous inspection	November 2011								
Website address	www.eon-engineeringacademy.com								
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		
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	N/A	N/A	49	23	N/A		N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	N/A								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warwickshire College 								

Contextual information

E.ON is one of the UK's leading power and gas companies with facilities across Europe, Russia and North America employing more than 79,000 employees, with 12,000 of these employees in the United Kingdom, generating electricity, and retailing power and gas. E.ON launched the Engineering Academy in March 2007, acquiring Empower Training Services and two training centres in April 2008. E.ON sold its distribution division and the other two centres, in April 2011, and now concentrates its training activities in Ratcliffe-on-Soar. One-fifth of apprentices are E.ON employees; the remainder work for other companies. All the off-the-job learning takes place in the engineering academy training centre at the power station. The engineering academy employs eleven trainers, two assessors and a lead internal verifier. The subcontractor, Warwickshire College, delivers the technical certificate at the training centre. This inspection focused on advanced apprenticeships in engineering.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Margaret Hobson HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and 2 additional inspectors, assisted by the Training Delivery Manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

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:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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