

Professional Business and Training Solutions Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		16–18 June 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- achievement is good and most learners get jobs or work placements that enable them to gain the health care professional status needed to sustain employment
- expert tutors ensure that learners develop good vocational and personal skills that enable them to work as effective team members in medical laboratories
- it offers innovative courses which provide learners with the specific skills needed to fill the specialist health technician vacancies of local, regional and national employers
- safeguarding is good and the high levels of professional and personal support from tutors and managers enables learners to develop a good understanding of British values and the confidence to promote these values in their workplaces.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- individual learning plans do not provide learners with enough information to identify the progress they make towards meeting their personal goals
- senior leaders and managers do not use data well enough to allow them to evaluate the progress and achievements of the small number of learners
- managers do not know enough about how well the training meets the needs of employers and allows learners to progress in their careers once they completed their courses and gained employment.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the information available to learners so that they can better evaluate the progress they have made towards meeting their personal learning goals.
- Ensure that managers analyse data and use it to make accurate judgements about learners' progress and achievement.
- Collect feedback from employers to evaluate the impact of training on long-term employment prospects for learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Professional Business and Training Services Ltd (PBTS) provides specialist courses that prepare learners for work in biomedical laboratories. At the time of inspection, 10 learners were studying intermediate qualifications in basic haematology and point-of-care testing, two learners were taking courses in biomedical sciences and two learners were following a programme in medical laboratory sciences. Most learners have minority ethnic heritage.
- Outcomes for learners are good. Learners on courses for laboratory technicians achieve well, and better than those at other similar providers. PBTS has built on the success of a pilot in the previous year and now provides biomedical science courses specifically tailored to individual employers' needs. These new courses have been very successful in 2014/15. All the learners who have taken these courses so far in 2014/15 have completed them and gained valuable skills and qualifications. There are no differences in achievement between different groups of learners.
- Learners develop a better understanding of the specialist vocational language used by biomedical scientists, and of mathematics and information technology; they apply their skills well. Assessors provide well-tailored support and guidance so that learners build on their prior knowledge and experience and gain confidence quickly. Learners develop the skills needed to be successful at interviews for employment; many learners who have been unemployed for a long time go on to gain their first employment. Employed learners develop a wider range of skills and techniques that prepare them well for taking on additional responsibilities.
- PBTS uses its good strategic partnerships with employers and employment agencies, and lengthy work placements, to good effect so that most learners gain full time employment on completing their courses. Many learners also work towards registration with the Health and Care Professions Council, a pre-requisite for permanent employment and further progression. Learners attend their training sessions on time and attendance rates are high. Most learners develop a very good attitude to learning, are highly motivated and enthusiastic and seek out opportunities for other courses that enable them to increase their skills further.
- Learners show high levels of professional conduct in their work. They are tolerant and respectful, work well independently and as team members, ensure that they test specimens safely, accurately and on time, and check their results with others.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the good outcomes of learners. Learners gain valuable medical laboratory skills quickly and the standard of their written and

practical work is good. This enhances their chances of employment or promotion in the biomedical sector.

- Trainers have high expectations of learners. They plan a variety of laboratory-based practical lessons, simulating hospital laboratories and point-of-care experiences, which motivate learners well. Trainers use well-chosen questions that test learners’ knowledge thoroughly. Trainers encourage learners to recall previous learning and apply it to new practical tasks and theory. As a result, learners gain a good understanding of medical laboratory techniques, make good progress in lessons and apply their new learning within their job roles.
- Trainers have very good vocational knowledge and experience. They use this effectively to ensure learners understand the theory of pathology and apply it to medical laboratory practice. For example, learners can analyse the blood test results they have generated and hypothesise a diagnosis or identify further tests they will carry out to reach a diagnosis.
- Learners benefit greatly from specialist courses to develop the skills they need for their job roles. Trainers have devised and gained accreditation for courses, such as competencies in medical laboratory sciences, which enable learners to gain the additional medical laboratory technical skills they require to gain employment or perform more specialist tasks within their workplace.
- Trainers and employers work very well together. As a result, they plan learning opportunities to meet the changing needs of the sector and to ensure that learners have the most current skills to apply in the workplace, enabling them to be more confident and more valuable as team members.
- Trainers carry out a thorough assessment of learners’ skills and employment potential at the start of their courses. Trainers use the results effectively to ensure that learners are on the best courses to support their technical skills development and, where appropriate, to enable learners to gain health care professional status or Institute of Biomedical Sciences recognition. However, trainers do not use individual learning plans well enough to enable learners to identify their personal goals or to set short- and long-term targets against which they, and their assessors, can measure their progress.
- Learners receive good, well-timed feedback. Immediate oral feedback from trainers during practical sessions helps learners to perfect their technical skills and produce practical work of a good standard. Trainers give detailed feedback on written and practical assignments; this helps learners to reflect on their learning. However, while trainers’ written feedback states what learners have done well, it does not always tell learners what they need to do to improve their work or challenge the more able learners to do better.
- Most learners have GCSEs or higher-level qualifications in English and mathematics before they apply; those that do not receive good guidance and support so that they can develop these skills before beginning the courses. The courses focus well on developing the vocational and technical language, mathematical and technological skills learners need to function effectively at work, but trainers do not challenge learners sufficiently to improve these skills further.
- Tutors and employers provide good information, advice and guidance for learners during their programmes. Learners also receive appropriate support and advice on their next steps into employment and towards professional registration. Consequently, employment and progression rates are good.
- Learners understand and follow safe practices well. Learners develop a good understanding of working practices within medical laboratories and can identify and minimise risks effectively for themselves and their colleagues.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- The directors of PBTS have a clear vision to deliver high-quality training for medical laboratory scientists. Their work and strong partnerships with local hospital trusts are ensuring that the

courses they offer, coupled with effective training, are enabling PBTS to achieve its aim of providing employers with competent laboratory technicians whose work is of a high standard. The directors have responded well to the priority areas for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership by developing accredited and specialist training programmes in science and biomedical healthcare that enable learners to gain employment.

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved because managers require trainers to carry out appropriate professional development; this means that learners benefit from up-to-date and good teaching and training. Safeguarding training ensures that all staff know how to be sure that learners are safe, for example by being aware of the signs of abuse or grooming. All staff, including the directors, recently attended training about forced marriages and female genital mutilation. There is a culture of respectful challenge to learners and staff about attitudes and behaviours.
- Managers now carry out both self-assessment and quality improvement planning well and identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately. Directors use feedback from learners and employers to set clear targets for development; they review progress towards better outcomes and improved standards of teaching, learning and assessment effectively in bi-monthly meetings. However, leaders and managers use of data is not well enough developed to allow them to evaluate the progress and achievement of the small number of funded learners. Managers do not collect feedback from employers to identify how effective their training is on improving long term job outcomes. Managers have high expectations of learners and ensure learners uphold high standards of behaviour and professional attitudes. They ensure learners value the contributions that all individuals make to the successful, and safe, running of ethnically diverse medical laboratories. Consequently, learners develop the vital teamwork skills that help them to work effectively as biomedical scientists.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. All managers and staff protect learners well from harm. Managers, tutors and assessors have a detailed understanding of safeguarding issues and deal with concerns promptly and sensitively to protect learners. Learners are confident about their knowledge and understand how to work safely in medical laboratories and hospital wards. Senior managers understand the need to promote British values, and strive to ensure that they prepare learners well for work and life in Britain. Managers recognise the need to include more detail on respect for the law and democracy to ensure that they do not leave discussions about these aspects to chance. Tutors and managers keep learners informed about information technology (IT) policies and the need to stay safe online; the IT system is set to allow access only to specific websites. Discussions about current issues, such as the execution of aid workers, families travelling to Syria and the kidnap of young girls in Nigeria, encourage and challenge learners to consider in more detail the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Professional Business and Training Solutions Limited

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	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Science	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	46							
Principal/CEO	Mr David Taiwo							
Date of previous inspection	October 2012							
Website address	http://www.pbtsltd.co.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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	-	-	-	14	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	-							
Part-time	-							
Number of community learners	-							
Number of employability learners	14							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Contextual information

PBTS Ltd is a specialist training provider for hospital laboratory scientists and other laboratory technicians. The organisation is managed by two directors. Based in Kent, they work with local hospital trusts and other healthcare employers to provide training for learners seeking to gain laboratory experience to complement their academic qualifications, those looking for a career change and for employees who need to increase their skills and techniques.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Christopher Jones HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the managing director 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 area 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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