

# Uniper Engineering Academy

Employer

## Inspection dates

9–11 August 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Leaders, including governors, have developed excellent relationships with industry partners and learning providers to promote high-quality engineering technician training to meet the needs of the sector.
- Leaders and managers have successfully tackled the weaknesses found at the previous inspection.
- The management of quality assurance, staff performance and curriculum have all improved, leading to good-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Apprenticeship achievement rates are high.
- Trainers and assessors are highly qualified and experienced and they ensure that apprentices work to the highest industry standards.
- Apprentices make good progress, develop a very wide range of specialist engineering skills and enjoy their learning.
- Apprentices demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning and professional behaviour in the training centre and in the workplace.
- Apprentices' progression into employment, higher-level training and senior positions in the workplace is very good.

### It is not yet an outstanding provider

- The provider does not yet have a sufficiently well-established track record of high success rates.
- Assessors' feedback on apprentices' written work is not always sufficiently detailed so that apprentices understand fully what they need to do to improve.
- Assessors do not routinely challenge apprentices to develop their English skills further so they improve the quality of their written work.

## **Full report**

### **Information about the provider**

- Uniper is an international energy company based in Germany, with about 14,000 employees spread across more than 40 countries. It is one of the largest power generation and trading companies in Europe and was created as a new company on 1 January 2016 following a major structural re-organisation of E.ON SE. In January 2016, the Engineering Academy (EA) moved to Uniper as part of the reorganisation.
- EA currently has 43 advanced engineering apprentices, of whom one-fifth are Uniper employees; the remainder work for other companies. All the off-the-job learning takes place at EA's training centre at Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station. EA employs 13 trainers, two assessors and a lead internal verifier. The subcontractor, Derby College, delivers the technical certificate at EA's training centre.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve further?**

- Monitor apprentices' progress closely so that the high achievement rates of the current year's apprentices are maintained or improved further.
- Improve staff skills in providing effective and detailed feedback to apprentices so that they all know exactly how to improve the quality of their work.
- Ensure that assessors provide opportunities for apprentices to develop and further improve their English skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Leaders and managers reacted swiftly to the weaknesses found at the last inspection. They carried out a comprehensive review of the provision and implemented a range of effective measures to tackle the areas for improvement. Most learners now complete the programme on time and apprenticeship achievement rates are high. English and mathematics pass rates are also high, assessment practices have improved and trainers and assessors now monitor the progress of apprentices more closely.
- Leaders have high standards and expectations of what apprentices can achieve. Managers identified poor standards of delivery from the subcontractor previously charged with delivering off-the-job training. EA now subcontracts with a high performing further education college for the delivery of its technical certificate training. Trainers from the college are highly qualified and experienced. Feedback from apprentices on the quality of their off-the-job training is now very positive.
- Links with employers in the energy industry are excellent. The apprenticeship programme meets the highly specialised needs of the power generation, distribution and supply industry. EA's managers work effectively with high-profile energy companies to provide them with high-quality apprenticeship provision tailored to their specific needs. Good links with regional business organisations and other learning providers, including those working in offender learning, help to promote the recruitment to advanced engineering apprenticeships which is an identified national priority for the sector.
- The performance management of teaching and training staff is good. All staff are observed regularly by EA managers. Following their observation, staff receive constructive feedback and a detailed action plan that clearly targets improvement and raises the quality of the provision. The range of staff training and development is wide and meets their professional needs. Close links with the subcontractor have resulted recently in EA staff attending training courses at the subcontractor in equality and diversity, meeting the needs of apprentices with specific learning difficulties and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Quality assurance arrangements are good. The use of learner feedback to gather information on the quality of teaching and training is good and actions taken in response to negative feedback are swift and effective. The observation of teaching and learning process provides managers with an accurate assessment of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as a clear understanding of where further improvements are required.
- EA managers have implemented very effective and regular review meetings with subcontractor managers to ensure that they meet EA's high standards. The self-assessment process is inclusive and accurate. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements and grades in the self-assessment report and acknowledged the excellent work that leaders had carried out through effective quality improvement since the last inspection.
- Curriculum planning is good and meets employers' needs well. EA managers work closely with employers to ensure that the specific NVQ units selected match apprentices' job roles and business needs. EA managers ensure that apprentices receive good-quality impartial advice and guidance about the career options that are available to them, with almost all learners remaining in the sector after completion of their framework and many going on to study higher-level qualifications.
- EA's leadership team meets regularly to consider all aspects of the apprenticeship programme. They have a close and in-depth understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The pace at which leaders and managers have worked over the last 18 months to improve the apprenticeship provision has been exemplary.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is effective. Managers have successfully ensured that all groups of apprentices do equally well. They take swift action to tackle the occasional instance of bullying or of poor behaviour of apprentices during off-the-job training. EA's assessors and subcontractor staff incorporate equality and diversity topics effectively during assessments and off-the-job training.
- Achievement rates have improved since the last inspection, when they were well below the national rate. Managers' actions led to a dramatic rise in apprentices' achievements in 2015 to equal the national rate and in the current year, achievements have improved further and are now well above the national rate. Managers recognise the need to maintain this high level of performance to realise their ambition to be an outstanding provider.

## ■ The governance of the provider

- The arrangements for providing oversight of the apprenticeship provision are good. After the last inspection, leaders established an effective governance board to provide strategic oversight and scrutiny of the quality of the provision and apprentices' performance at the engineering academy.
- Board members are well qualified and experienced in the energy industry. They have challenged EA's leadership team to secure rapid improvements since the previous inspection.

## ■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Learners feel safe and know who to contact if they feel vulnerable or threatened. EA managers promote safeguarding well and ensure that all relevant staff receive training and appropriate recruitment checks.
- Two senior staff act as the company's designated officers for safeguarding. They have received training commensurate with the role and they deal effectively and promptly with the small number of cases referred to them.
- Trainers and assessors promote safe working practices very well. EA staff place an exceptionally high priority on health and safety and learners have a good understanding of the wide range of specific hazards and risks in the workplace and how to deal with them.
- Managers have developed an effective strategy to protect learners from the risks of radicalisation and extremism and to promote British values.
- Learners have a basic understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremist ideology and they are able to demonstrate an appropriate understanding of British values.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- EA's managers work well with industry partners to provide relevant additional qualifications for apprentices that match business requirements, apprentices' job roles and career aspirations. Apprentices work alongside experienced professionals in high-quality workplaces and develop good skills. For example, those studying engineering maintenance and control and instrumentation learn to monitor and maintain actuators, transformers, pumps and turbines to a high standard.
- An effective tracking and monitoring system helps trainers to identify quickly any apprentice at risk of falling behind. Trainers take prompt action to support these learners during additional one-to-one sessions when apprentices are at the training centre. Assessors provide additional support for apprentices in the workplace to help them achieve on time.
- Trainers guide apprentices well throughout their studies. They provide particularly good support for apprentices who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who achieve as well as their peers.
- Initial assessment is effective in ensuring that apprentices are able to succeed on a challenging four-year advanced apprenticeship programme. Effective advice and guidance ensures that apprentices enrol on the most effective study route and that they have a clear understanding of subsequent opportunities for career progression and development.
- Assessors and trainers have a good understanding of the energy industry. They use their skills and knowledge well to support apprentices during the block training days at the training centre, when most apprentices are away from home and in unfamiliar surroundings. Trainers and assessors make good use of the high-quality practical resources and teaching rooms at the training centre to support learning. Apprentices make good use of online learning materials at the training centre as well as accessing useful advice and guidance relating to their qualifications, safety, health and well-being.
- The large majority of apprentices develop their use of mathematics and ICT well, particularly through the technical training and the wide range of additional training delivered at the training centre. Most apprentices have already achieved a good grade in GCSE English but they are not challenged sufficiently to develop further their English skills. For example, assessors do not always provide the support to help apprentices improve the quality of their written work. Consequently, apprentices continue to repeat the same spelling and grammatical errors.
- Assessors' feedback on apprentices' work is prompt and constructive. In a few cases, assessors' feedback is too superficial and does not help apprentices improve or recognise what they have done well. Assessors' feedback to employers is good and helps them to schedule work and on-the-job training activities in a way that helps most apprentices complete their qualification in the planned period.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**is good**

- Apprentices learn well in training sessions and have positive attitudes to their learning. They develop good employment-related skills and understand how these will help them to improve their job prospects and the potential to progress to higher-level training. Apprentices enjoy their learning and talk confidently about the good progress they have made since starting at EA. Apprentices are rightly proud of their achievements.
- Apprentices benefit from the good range of additional skills and qualifications that they gain at the training centre and in the workplace. Skills such as welding, manual handling, risk assessment and the use of hand tools greatly enhance apprentices' employability and personal skills.
- Apprentices develop their confidence well and acquire new practical skills and technical knowledge. They apply their learning to complex tasks in the workplace to a good standard; for example, in independently and confidently removing, inspecting and maintaining water pressure valves.
- Apprentices' attendance is high. Managers closely monitor attendance at off-the-job training and in the workplace. Apprentices demonstrate high standards of behaviour and professional conduct that their employers value.
- Apprentices feel safe during their residential training at the training centre and in the workplace. Good arrangements are in place to support apprentices staying away from home to ensure their safety and welfare. Apprentices have developed and routinely apply good safe working practices throughout their training programme and in the workplace.
- Trainers and workplace supervisors place a very high priority of health and safety in the hazardous environment that apprentices work. Apprentices feel safe and are aware of their responsibilities to protect themselves and others from harm. They have a good awareness of safeguarding and an improving awareness of how to stay safe online, including from radical and extremist ideologies. Assessors reinforce these topics regularly during progress reviews to ensure apprentices' understanding, especially in relation to the risks posed to power generation and distribution facilities.
- EA trainers and assessors provide clear and impartial careers advice and guidance to apprentices. Their employers retain almost all as full-time permanent staff. Apprentices receive support to help them progress onto higher education while with their current employer and many go on to achieve high-level qualifications in engineering.
- Apprentices' work is of a good standard and in mathematics, apprentices improve their skills to a particularly high level. They are polite, behave well and act professionally in the workplace. Apprentices demonstrate respect for other apprentices and staff, make suitable contributions to discussions and build productive relationships.

## **Outcomes for learners**

**are good**

- Apprenticeship achievement rates have improved considerably since the previous inspection and for current apprentices they are now high. The proportion of apprentices who complete within the planned period is also now high. However, the provider does not yet have a sufficiently well-established track record of high success rates. Pass rates for the few learners who need to complete their functional skills qualifications at level 2 in English and mathematics are high.
- Many learners go on to study a higher-level apprenticeship and to achieve professionally registered engineering technician status. Employers comment favourably on the high level of skill and motivation that apprentices demonstrate. Apprentices quickly become valued team members in the workplace and they contribute to the success of their employers' business. The majority of apprentices go on to achieve supervisory and management positions in the energy industry.
- Apprentices make good progress from their different starting points. No significant performance differences exist between different groups of apprentices.

## Provider details

Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	72
Principal/CEO	David Hughes
Website address	<a href="http://Uniper-engineeringacademy.com">Uniper-engineeringacademy.com</a>

## 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 learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	0	0	26	17	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14–16	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ Derby College							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Jai Sharda, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector
Mohammed Feeaz	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by EA's competency, standards and process specialist, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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