

The Manchester Metropolitan University

Higher education institution

Inspection dates

20–23 November 2018

Overall effectiveness			Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding	16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding	Apprenticeships	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding		
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Leaders, managers and the governing body have a clear vision to provide high-quality study and apprenticeship programmes, which are being effectively executed, and making higher education accessible and beneficial for all.
- Employer and stakeholder engagement, particularly in the art and design sector, is exceptional.
- Leaders, managers and the governing body have invested in high-quality, specialist laboratories, studios and resources to the benefit of all students and apprentices.
- Performance management is highly effective.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are highly effective in providing students and apprentices with extensive and highly appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours that support them to progress to further study or employment.
- The progress that study programme students make on their programmes from their starting points is outstanding, with a high proportion making better than expected progress.
- Tutors very effectively use peer assessment to help study programme students develop innovative and creative ideas in the design and production of their artwork.
- Apprentices develop a good standard of technical and practical skills, which they use in the workplace to make a positive contribution to their employers' businesses.
- Tutors on the study programme in foundation in art and design diligently prepare students for higher education, resulting in most progressing to their university of choice.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that the information, advice and guidance that students and apprentices receive are highly effective.
- Tutors do not ensure that apprentices' progress reviews are used well enough to prioritise apprentices' skill development in the workplace.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Manchester Metropolitan University is one of the largest providers of higher education in the United Kingdom. Based in the heart of the city of Manchester, it provides an extensive range of undergraduate, postgraduate and apprenticeship programmes. Approximately 37,000 students study on over 800 programmes, across 40 subject areas. A significant proportion of these students are full-time undergraduates, studying single-honours degrees. The university employs approximately 1,800 academic staff.
- The university offer the 16 to 19 study programmes and apprenticeships that are in scope for inspection. The study programme consists of foundation in art and design only and accounts for the vast majority of the provision being inspected. A very small minority of adult students study foundation in art and design. The remaining apprenticeship provision comprises the higher apprenticeship laboratory scientist and the level 5 apprenticeship standard for laboratory scientists.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders, managers and staff should ensure that progress reviews for apprentices clearly identify the progress that apprentices are making in their studies. They should prioritise the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace to complement those developed while learning off the job.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders, managers and governors set very high aspirations for students and apprentices, clearly articulated through the university's strategic objectives. They work tirelessly to ensure that knowledge acquired through research is used to inform students' and apprentices' skill development in the pursuit of the university's vision of making higher education accessible and beneficial to all.
- Leaders, managers and staff have been extremely successful in maintaining the high standards of education for study programme students since the previous inspection. They have ensured that apprentices receive a good standard of education and training, which they use to contribute successfully to their employers' businesses.
- Performance management is outstanding. Leaders and managers ensure that the management of the performance of staff on the study and apprenticeship programmes are highly effective. They ensure that annual reviews are used to clearly identify the performance of members of staff and set targets for the forthcoming year. Managers have weekly meetings with teaching staff to discuss their performance and that of their students and apprentices. Managers swiftly intervene where appropriate, to support staff to improve their practice through an extensive range of professional development activities.
- Leaders and managers work hard to ensure that self-assessment is accurate and improvement planning is effective. They meticulously evaluate the standard of the provision throughout the year. They involve appropriate stakeholders in this process, such as students and apprentices, employers and alumni, prior to the documents being ratified by the education committee. Leaders ensure that improvement planning focuses on the aspects of provision that have the biggest impact on students' and apprentices' learning. This has resulted in swift improvements in the apprenticeship provision in the past 12 months.
- Leaders and managers have exceptional working relationships with employers, and with prestigious employers and galleries in the art sector to ensure that the curriculum they offer meets the exacting standards of businesses and the sectors they serve. Leaders work closely with these organisations in the development of the new standards in chemical science. This collaboration has contributed to the development of an apprenticeship standard that is much more relevant for employers, meeting the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they require in their businesses.
- Leaders work very closely with employers, stakeholders, alumni and students to ensure that the curriculum is aligned with the sectors it serves and meets regional, national and international skill priorities. They constantly adapt and refine the curriculum to ensure that students and apprentices acquire the most relevant skills that support them in progressing to their next steps. For example, study programme students can exhibit their work at city centre art galleries. Apprenticeship managers work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices experience a wide range of placements on their programme to expose them to the different aspects of the business.
- Leaders ensure that there are extensive and very high-quality services at the university to support students and apprentices to make the most appropriate choices to meet their

aspirations. The information, advice and guidance that they receive effectively support them at the start, during and towards the end of their studies. However, the independent career guidance that apprentices receive is not good enough. Apprentices do not fully receive information about the potential employment pathways following the completion of their apprenticeship, which limits their career progression.

- Leaders and managers promote equality and diversity diligently throughout the university to represent the communities that it serves and promoting their strategic priority of widening the participation of underrepresented groups. For example, they have been very successful in improving the proportion of female apprentices on the level 5 apprenticeship in chemical science; almost two-thirds of all apprentices studying this programme are female.

The governance of the provider

- The governance of the provider is effective. The governing body operates a policy of devolved responsibility for the governance of the study and apprenticeship programmes. The operational and strategic governance of these programmes is at a faculty level, and the academic board and its subcommittees.
- Leaders ensure that senior managers are held to account for the performance of programmes; where improvements are required, managers act swiftly and effectively to improve and maintain the high standards set by leaders and governors.
- The members of committees and boards are highly enthusiastic and very experienced. They hold senior managers to account for the performance of these programmes, which are clearly aligned to the university's education strategy.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the designated safeguarding lead for the university has received the appropriate safeguarding training to allow them to execute their role effectively. All staff providing education or training to students and apprentices have received appropriate training on how to make referrals should a safeguarding disclosure be made.
- Leaders have prioritised the training for staff on the 'Prevent' duty and comply with their responsibilities of a higher education institution as set out in legislation. However, despite staff being trained in this important aspect of safeguarding, and students receiving training at the start of their course, too many students and apprentices are not fully appreciative of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism where they live, study or work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Tutors use their extensive knowledge, skills and passion for their subject to plan and deliver high-quality learning that inspires and motivates students and apprentices. All students and almost all apprentices develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours very well and make at least the progress of which they are capable. They achieve their qualifications, with the large majority of students on study programmes achieving merit

and distinction grades.

- Tutors skilfully design assignments and project briefs that build on students' prior knowledge and skills and promote more independent learning and critical thinking skills. Using project work, students can develop their ideas and be creative in their responses to the brief. Students gain the skills they need to enable them to design, create and exhibit their work both at the university and at external venues.
- Staff use creative assessment methods that challenge and enable students and apprentices to further develop their skills and knowledge. For example, students on study programmes frequently use peer assessment. This helps them to be more creative when developing their own ideas and designs, as well as appreciating the different artistic concepts of their peers.
- Tutors' feedback to students and apprentices is highly effective. They provide students with the right mix of encouragement and useful feedback to improve their work. Students appreciate and value this insightful feedback, which inspires them to try new ideas. Tutors' feedback to apprentices helps them extend and apply their knowledge in the workplace.
- Students and apprentices benefit from the university's extensive and high-quality resources. Art workshops are exceptionally well resourced and provide students with individual work stations to create and display their work. High-quality science laboratories provide apprentices with up-to-date equipment similar to that which they use in their workplaces on which to practise their skills.
- Tutors provide apprentices with a good range of flexible learning for off-the-job training, which includes residential workshops. Tutors make good use of the university's virtual learning environment to support apprentices on their programmes. Apprentices access a wide range of high-quality webinars, online resources and learning materials. They use these resources to support their off-the-job training at times that are convenient to them and their employers.
- Tutors carefully plan learning to ensure that students and apprentices develop their English and mathematical skills. For example, apprentices use precise calculations to work out the optimum number of experiments they need to conduct to achieve reliable results. Students on the graphic design and illustration pathway are required to research and use the precise meaning of words when matching images to words, which they do with enthusiasm.
- Staff quickly identify students who have additional support needs before they start their course and ensure that they have personal development plans to support them on their programmes. Staff frequently monitor the students' plans to ensure that they are being supported to make the progress of which they are capable. However, a few tutors on the apprenticeship programme do not sufficiently use the information on apprentices' starting points to set individual personalised targets that develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

- Students and apprentices are highly motivated and enjoy their learning. They attend their sessions regularly. They are confident and self-assured in their practical and academic work and are very proud of the knowledge and skills they acquire and the work they produce.
- Tutors provide high levels of support and encouragement, which raises students' and apprentices' aspirations and expectations of what they can achieve. As a result, most students and apprentices develop excellent knowledge and skills and produce work of a very high standard.
- Staff provide highly effective information, advice and guidance that help students make informed choices about their next steps. For example, students on study programmes benefit from visits to, and guest speakers from, a range of universities. Previous students provide useful and interesting talks on their progression from university and the range of careers available in the arts industry. Most students know what they want to do next and what specialist art pathway they want to progress to in higher education. However, apprentices do not receive sufficient impartial careers guidance on what employment opportunities exist on completion of their studies.
- Students and apprentices benefit from well-planned activities that thoroughly prepare them for higher education and employment. Students on study programmes complete mini higher education projects and work alongside undergraduate students, which prepares them for the demands of study at undergraduate level. They attend workshops that enable them to gain additional skills, such as in bookbinding and the use of a letter press.
- Students and apprentices feel safe and are safe. They benefit from the excellent support services that the university provides. Students and apprentices have access to specialist counselling staff and a wide range of well-being services that support them in their personal lives and ensure that a very high proportion complete their programmes. Apprentices have high levels of awareness of health and safety for the environments in which they work. Students and apprentices know whom to contact if they have any concerns.
- The small minority of students who are away from home and staying in halls of residence are very well supported in the transition to campus life. Tutors ensure that they quickly meet with students in their halls of residence. Local police provide them with talks on how to keep themselves safe while away from home and the importance of securing their rooms.
- Tutors skilfully design projects and activities that further develop study programme learners' English, mathematical and digital skills. For example, students on the fashion and textiles pathway research and skilfully use geometrical shapes in their designs. Students are required to write reflective evaluations in their personal journals. Tutors help students create digital portfolios of their work to prepare them for higher education interviews.

Outcomes for learners

Outstanding

- The proportion of students who complete their programmes in 2017/18 is very high. Almost all study programme students who commence the foundation art and design course are successful. All students made the progress expected of them, with almost half of these students making better than expected progress and achieving a merit or distinction grade.
- Most current apprentices are making the progress that is expected of them on their apprenticeships. For the few apprentices who are not making the expected progress, managers have put in place strategies to help these apprentices to catch up, which is having a positive impact on their studies.
- Leaders and managers have been successful in ensuring that there are no discernible gaps in achievement or progress made between different groups of students and apprentices.
- Almost all study programme students in 2017/18 progressed to higher education, many at prestigious universities and colleges of art, while almost all apprentices gained permanent employment within the chemical science industries.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The university has 148 students studying level 3 foundation art and design who are based on a campus in central Manchester. This provision accounts for around 80% of all in-scope provision considered as part of this inspection.
- Managers and tutors are diligent in ensuring that students make the most productive use of their time, emerging skills and abilities. They have an exceptional oversight of the progress that students make on their courses that very effectively informs their planning of learning. All students at least met, with almost half exceeding, their targets grades in 2017/18.
- Tutors ensure that assessments completed at the start of the course are thorough. Tutors use the results of these assessments to plan learning that challenges students with stimulating and diverse pathways. This allows students to explore and develop appropriate techniques with confidence, wit and sophistication. They benefit significantly from working alongside under- and postgraduate students and having equal access to the outstanding resources on site.
- Students use written and spoken English with assurance, respect and accuracy. Annotation and the insistence that they record the processes undertaken are central to their learning and understanding while on programme. They delight in inventively exploring the etymology and nuances of language and readily comprehend, in their exploratory and finished work, the professional precision that is needed when matching image to language.
- Information, advice and guidance are excellent. Students, despite knowing what the demands of the programme are prior to enrolment, find that their current experience exceeds their initial expectations. Tutors are impartial in their recommendations for further study and have only the best interests of students in mind, with tutors insisting that students apply only to institutions that offer the closest match to their aspirations.

- Programme leaders ensure that students understand the employment demands and realities of their profession. Excellent use is made of former students, who are now successful industry practitioners, who participate in a structured alumni programme that prepares existing students for the demands and expectations in their chosen fields. Additional extra-curricular activities enable students to identify and reflect on the wider employability skills needed for professional success. For example, a recent speaker was able to inform on the world of illustrations, payment commissions and working conditions.
- Assignments are stimulating and adventurous, and inspire students to take risks in their work. The principle of 'permission to fail' is fundamental to their learning and encourages students to make enterprising decisions and discoveries and to create work that is often of a very high standard and, crucially, reflects the world in which they live. While completing a mini-project, students working on visual concepts for a 'Day in the Life' are encouraged to think abstractly, for example, through storyboarding a door handle and expressing how the different hands that use it throughout the day all have a unique story to tell.
- Students are vibrant, well informed, confident and well behaved, though occasionally attitudes to punctuality and studio practice are somewhat casual. Group work and collaborative learning are central to the programme of study, with mutual respect for the work of others being an absolute requirement that is adhered to by all students.
- Students' progression to higher education, mainly to institutions of international esteem, is outstanding.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The university has 46 apprentices studying level 5 apprenticeships in chemical science who are located at employers throughout England. Apprentices are studying framework and standards-based apprenticeships. This provision accounts for a small minority of the overall provision considered on inspection.
- Leaders and managers have been successful in ensuring that the programme meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They ensure that apprentices receive a good standard of education, aligned with effectively planned and well-coordinated on- and off-the-job training. This helps apprentices to link theory to the tasks that they complete at work and to make an effective contribution to their employers' businesses.
- Most apprentices make at least the progress expected of them on their apprenticeship. Apprentices benefit from the use of high-quality, state-of-the-art science laboratories at the university, which prepares them for the work they will need to complete in the workplace.
- Tutors have current and relevant experience. They use their specialist subject knowledge and technical experience to ensure that apprentices develop a very sound knowledge and understanding of current practice and the innovations taking place in the chemical sciences industry.
- Apprentices develop their mathematical skills extensively within their studies and in the workplace to carry out routine and complex tasks to the required standard in the workplace. Almost all apprentices' written work is of a good standard.
- Most current apprentices are making the progress that is expected in relation to their

starting points. Where apprentices have fallen behind, tutors support these apprentices effectively to catch up.

- Apprentices develop good workplace skills. They use the information that they acquire at university or through online learning to complete work of a high standard in the workplace. For example, apprentices are involved in testing and identifying the thermal stability of new products within the medical innovation industry, while others assist scientists to develop analytical methods to track impurities and residual solvents in medication.
- Tutors plan the learning for apprentices effectively. However, progress reviews do not sufficiently consider the skills that apprentices need to develop in the workplace. Too often, reviews are cursory and place a disproportionate focus on the completion of units of qualifications as opposed to the development of the new knowledge, skills and understanding needed in the workplace.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133844
Type of provider	Higher education institution
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	263
Head of Academic Collaboration	Julie Watson
Telephone number	0161 247 2000
Website	www.mmu.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	0	0	0	148	18	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	22	24		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	None							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	None							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Total People Limited							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of academic collaboration, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and self-evaluation documents and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners 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.

Inspection team

Paul Cocker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Price	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christopher Young	Ofsted Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector

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