

# Middlesex University

Monitoring visit report

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Peter Nelson, Her Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Higher education institution
<b>Address:</b>	The Burrows London NW4 4BT

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Middlesex University runs a programme of higher- and degree-level apprenticeships from level 5 to level 7. The apprentices in scope for this visit include four learners on a level 5 construction management apprenticeship framework, and 132 learners on level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship standard. Managers are not recruiting more apprentices in construction until the industry finalises the new standards. The nursing apprenticeship programme recruited its first cohort of learners in December 2018. Managers plan to recruit several more cohorts over the course of the year.

### Themes

#### **How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?**

#### **Reasonable progress**

Governors and managers have a sound strategic rationale which underpins the introduction of the apprenticeship programme. It forms a natural extension to the university's longstanding tradition of delivering workplace learning. Apprenticeships fit with the university's mission of 'transforming potential into success'. They also contribute to the university's strategy to improve local and regional productivity and promote social mobility.

Staff at the university have developed strong and effective relationships with employers and industry lead bodies. For example, they work closely with local and regional national health service (NHS) trusts and the Nursing and Midwifery Council. As a result, the newly launched nursing associate apprenticeship meets the requirements of the industry and helps address the high-level workforce development strategy of the NHS.

Managers of the apprenticeship programme acted promptly to identify a new training provider to deliver the functional skills component of the apprenticeship programme when the original provider went out of business. At the time of the inspection, the small minority of learners who require functional skills qualifications had not yet

started this component. However, apprentices receive good support and guidance to help develop their wider literacy and numeracy skills.

Through self-assessment, managers accurately identify, and take effective action to address initial weaknesses. For example, they are improving the quality of how assessors and managers record, track and monitor progress of apprentices. They also recognise the need to improve the quality and consistency of the construction programme prior to introducing the new standard, so it matches that of the nursing associate programme. Managers are also working to ensure that all high-level university policies and procedures incorporate, and make suitable reference to, apprenticeship programmes.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress**

Staff have comprehensive pre-entry procedures in place to evaluate applicants' prior skills and experience and assess their suitability for the programme. This helps ensure that the apprentices they enrol benefit from the knowledge, skills and experience they acquire from the programme. Nursing apprentices significantly enhance their career prospects as a result of taking the apprenticeship programme.

Managers carry out suitable checks to identify those learners who require functional skills qualifications as part of their apprenticeship. They also ascertain well the additional help learners need to develop their literacy and numeracy and provide effective support if required.

Managers have structured the nursing apprenticeship programme well to enable apprentices to acquire appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours, both through classroom-based and workplace activities. Apprentices particularly enjoy and benefit from the opportunity of attending on a block-release basis, where they utilise the university's high-quality facilities such as specialist teaching laboratories, mock-up hospital wards, and virtual reality anatomy teaching aids. They particularly like the experience and benefits of being part of a university setting.

Staff work closely with employers to circulate apprentices between different work settings. This provides the opportunity for apprentices to extend their experience, for example in the treatment of adults, children, and palliative care patients.

Managers and assessors have effective procedures in place to review apprentices' work. Staff provide detailed and informative feedback to apprentices on their written submissions. Managers have correctly identified that current arrangements to review progress at the tripartite meetings between apprentice, manager and assessor are not sufficiently thorough. At the time of the visit they were in the process of establishing a more comprehensive and detailed way of recording these meetings and improving procedures for tracking the progress of apprentices.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers take effective steps to help ensure apprentices' health, safety and well-being. Apprentices feel safe and have a sound understanding of safeguarding and know who they would speak to if they have any safeguarding concerns.

Nursing and healthcare apprentices take part in an occupational health review to assess their suitability to work in the sector. This same group receives a broad range of training from their employer which includes safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

Leaders and managers deal promptly and thoroughly with any safeguarding concerns that arise. They take suitable action, and where appropriate involve external agencies from whom they access more specialist advice and guidance.

A small minority of apprentices are not familiar enough with the 'Prevent' duty, including the risks of extremism and radicalisation, and its relevance to their work and lives.

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