

Develop-U

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Develop-U was inspected in March 2019. At that time, inspectors judged its overall effectiveness to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 47 apprentices on standards-based programmes and frameworks. Seventeen apprentices were on the team leader/supervisor standard at level 3, eight were on the operations/departmental manager standard at level 5, and five were on the improvement practitioner standard at level 4. Seventeen apprentices had recently started their programme; 15 of these were on the improving operational performance at level 2 and the remaining two were on the operations and quality improvement framework at level 3.

Themes

How successfully do leaders and managers identify and address areas for improvement in the quality of education that apprentices receive?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers work proactively with employers to plan and deliver apprenticeship programmes that meet employers' needs. The content of the programme is highly relevant to employers' operations and current priorities. Employers identify significant savings due to apprentices' projects on reducing waste, improving efficiency and improving storage principles.

Apprentices enjoy their studies and most remain on their programme to the end. Leaders and managers regularly canvas apprentices' opinion to ensure that this is the case, and take appropriate action when necessary. For example, when apprentices raised concerns about the approach and feedback from coach assessors, leaders and managers took decisive steps to improve the training that apprentices receive.

Leaders and managers effectively check the attendance of apprentices and their submission of training logs. They make appropriate changes when necessary. For example, when apprentices do not attend enough of their off-the-job training, leaders and managers put on extra delivery sessions. They also make sure that the employer supports apprentices to attend the sessions.

Leaders and managers provide good opportunities for delivery staff to conduct research that keeps them up to date with academic developments in their subject area. Staff also work with employers on the application of theoretical models to their business to inform their teaching. However, staff do not receive enough training to support them to improve their assessment practice.

Leaders and managers have been too slow to respond to some of the areas for improvement from the last inspection. They accurately identify ineffective processes and take appropriate steps to make improvements. However, they do not take rapid enough action to improve the planning of learning for individual apprentices or the quality of the feedback that apprentices receive.

How effectively do staff use the information that they have about apprentices, and their starting points, to plan and deliver a curriculum that enables apprentices to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours? Insufficient progress

Tutors and coach assessors do not make enough use of the information that they have about apprentices to plan a programme to meet their individual needs. They direct apprentices to complete off-the-job training so that apprentices can provide evidence that they meet the requirements of the standard. However, tutors and coach assessors do not tailor training well enough to address gaps in apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders and managers now implement effective processes for the recruitment, selection and induction of apprentices. They carry out a range of appropriate checks to ensure that apprentices are suitable for the programme and compile a portfolio of information about apprentices. In one case, this resulted in the delivery of two different programmes for an employer rather than the single programme that was in the original plan. However, too often induction activities do not take account of the skills the apprentices have at the start of the programme and this information does not inform the teaching content.

Leaders and managers carefully plan the delivery of the apprenticeship programme for each cohort. They ensure that programmes cover the requirements of the standard and meet the needs of the employer. A few apprentices benefit from being able to take on increased responsibility in the workplace. For example, a small number of apprentices have gained promotion to project manager roles or have become continuous improvement coordinators. However, all apprentices complete the same programme, regardless of their prior experience. There are no checks to make sure the curriculum is sufficiently ambitious for them.

Leaders and managers do not adequately monitor the progress that apprentices make. They track attendance, assessment and completion of off-the-job training

using a variety of different systems and intervene when apprentices fall behind. However, the oversight is not systematic. It does not identify sufficiently the extent to which apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

How well do coach assessors use assessment to support apprentices to make rapid progress and achieve their learning goals? Insufficient progress

Coach assessors do not take sufficient account of the existing knowledge, skills and behaviours of apprentices when setting assignments. All apprentices complete the same work, regardless of their starting point. Therefore, too often apprentices do not benefit from targeted activities to help them to make rapid progress.

Coach assessors do not use a broad enough range of assessment methods to identify gaps in the knowledge, skills and behaviours of apprentices. They rely too much on short answer questions and written assignments that link specifically to the standards.

Too often, coach assessors provide feedback to apprentices that is not constructive and does not help them to improve their work. The feedback mainly confirms that work meets the required standard. Assessors do not give enough guidance to those apprentices who need further support to produce work that meets the expected conventions of the level of study. For example, operations/departmental manager apprentices do not receive useful feedback on how to improve their academic referencing.

In too many instances, coach assessors do not provide apprentices with timely feedback on their assignments. Therefore, apprentices assume that the standard of their work is appropriate, and do not make improvements to the quality of the work that they produce for future submissions.

Leaders take appropriate steps to ensure that suitable end-point assessments are in place. They design the programme to prepare apprentices for the end-point assessment. Apprentices studying the improvement practitioner standard have been able to improve their readiness by completing mock end-point assessments. They are more competent in carrying out professional discussions as a result of the simulated activities.

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