

Uniper Technologies Limited

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	1270936
Name of lead inspector:	Helen Whelan, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Technology Centre Ratcliffe-on-Soar Nottingham NG11 0EG

Monitoring visit:

Context and focus of visit

Uniper Technologies Limited received a new provider monitoring visit in January 2019. At that time, inspectors made progress judgements under three themes.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances. It was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

These visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners in this period, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, inspectors carried out this monitoring activity remotely. As a result, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would be the case during an on-site inspection. Therefore, this report provides a more limited level of assurance.

The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgement below. Inspectors did not evaluate leaders' response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer of 2020, when the provider was not open to all learners and there were no national expectations regarding remote education.

Theme

What progress are leaders and those responsible for governance making to ensure that staff teach a curriculum and provide support to meet learners' needs, including the provision of remote/online learning?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers continue to provide high-quality apprenticeships at Uniper's engineering academy. The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the challenges posed by national restrictions. Apprentices study the theoretical aspects of the course online through block release at Derby College. They complete projects to develop their practical skills at work or at home. Resources have been redesigned and considerable investment in digital technology supports online teaching. As a result, apprentices have maintained high levels of motivation and participation.

Tutors and trainers are experienced in their vocational specialisms and are adept at relating their teaching to apprentices' job roles. Leaders provide good development opportunities for staff with a view to developing the curriculum further. For example, trainers completed a foundation science course that they are now going to teach to

apprentices. Trainers maintain currency from professional updating on engineering topics such as lubrication bearing, drives and gearing systems.

Lessons are planned well to combine the theory and practical nature of the engineering course. The first four weeks provide apprentices with a firm foundation for their learning. Apprentices learn how to use all the basic equipment and understand health and safety practices. This then leads on to pipe work, which develops their skills further.

Tutors use online platforms effectively to ensure that apprentices make good progress. They have a clear sense of the knowledge and skills that apprentices need to acquire and build in time for apprentices to practise their skills and apply their knowledge to new contexts. In electrical lessons, apprentices recall previous learning on types of circuits and resistors and apply this to their workplace. Tutors provide clear explanations and ask probing questions to check understanding. Apprentices are actively involved and contribute through discussion, chat rooms and sharing their work on screen. In mechanics, apprentices give confident presentations about different types of wind tunnels. They make effective use of subject-specialist terminology and diagrams to support their ideas. Apprentices are reflective, self-correct when they make errors or omissions and discuss ways to improve.

Apprentices' work is of a good standard, clearly referenced and well presented. They take pride in what they do, for example when making presentations to their peers. Trainers' assessment of practical work is effective. They provide precise feedback on apprentices' skills as well as their personal effectiveness, including safe working, attitude to supervision and team working. Apprentices have a good understanding and are well prepared for their final assessment.

The online assessment and tracking system is not used well by staff. The results and feedback on apprentices' theory work are not routinely included. As a result, apprentices are not always clear about the progress they are making. Recently recruited apprentices are not sure how to work their way around the online system. Initial assessment results are not shared with trainers or assessors, making it difficult for them to establish apprentices' starting points. Assessors have not chased non-submitted work, which slows their progress further.

Uniper staff have very good relationships with employers, who value the frequent contact from the academy team. Apprentices and their employers benefit from frequent reviews with their assessor. These are comprehensively documented, along with their results, progress and areas for development. Employers are involved in selecting appropriate units for their apprentices but are not always able to reinforce learning within the workplace due to the current demands of the business.

Apprentices benefit from a culture of high aspiration. Assessors develop apprentices' work-ready skills and discuss the Engineering Technician qualification (EngTech), the first step to chartered status, with all apprentices. Apprentices are clear about their career progression opportunities.

Apprentices receive support if they struggle with their studies. Those with dyslexia are helped to organise their work and use smart pens to record lessons in order to help them achieve. The early careers team and Derby College staff produce formal assessments for apprentices identified as needing extra support. A support plan is produced but does not yet inform staff teaching plans at the academy.

Staff have relevant safeguarding training. All apprentices know who to contact if they have a safeguarding issue or are concerned about someone. Employers are not yet very well informed.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- assess apprentices' prior knowledge and skills before they start their programme and share the results with academy staff, so that they can use the information to plan on- and off-the-job training and learning support
- improve the use of the online assessment and tracking system, so that staff use it consistently well to monitor apprentices' progress and make interventions when needed.

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