

London Metropolitan College

Monitoring visit report

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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 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

London Metropolitan College (LMC) began offering apprenticeships in September 2018. At the time of the visit, there were 148 apprentices studying on three different standards-based apprenticeships. Thirty-three apprentices are studying on the level 3 project controls technician apprenticeship, 13 on the level 4 associate project manager apprenticeship and 102 on the level 6 project manager degree apprenticeship. The degree apprenticeship is validated by the University of West London. All apprentices are over the age of 19.

Apprentices work for a range of employers, including public and private sector organisations. At the time of the visit, apprentices' off-the-job training was generally remote, conducted via live videoconferencing software.

The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

Themes

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

Significant progress

LMC is part of a larger organisation specialising in project management. Apprentices benefit from this wider group specialism in terms of very up-to-date sector exposure and expertise of staff. The knowledge, skills and behaviours apprentices develop are new and substantial.

Leaders ensure that the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision are met. Apprentices are very carefully recruited and benefit from extremely good advice and guidance throughout their studies. They develop new knowledge and skills rapidly through very good quality on- and off-the-job training.

Leaders have recruited staff who are very well qualified and experienced. Tutors have a wealth of vocational and academic experience that they use to teach the project management apprenticeships to a very high standard. Leaders have made judicious investment in staffing to ensure that tutors continue to develop their pedagogical skills as well as providing ample professional updating opportunities.

Leaders, managers and tutors have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their sector. They have very productive relationships with a range of employers, including public and private sector organisations. Employers value the clarity of communication, the responsiveness of the team but, in particular, they value the high-quality training that their apprentices benefit from. Employers provide many examples of how apprentices contribute to their business from an early stage of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices, tutors and their employers have a good awareness of their learning over time. All stakeholders have a good awareness of final assessments, and apprentices are keenly aware of what they need to do to achieve the grade they are aspiring to. They are ambitious and keen to achieve their full potential.

Leaders carefully monitor their apprenticeship provision and implement actions to resolve concerns promptly. Leaders are now developing quality assurance processes further as they grow the apprenticeship provision so that they can retain the same high quality of provision.

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

Significant progress

Tutors and employers work closely together to design and review the curriculum so that apprentices build their learning very coherently. They plan on- and off-the-job training in a logical order which helps the apprentices confidently develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices learn about the fundamentals of project management before progressing on to learn about managing projects effectively. Apprentices then build on this learning to develop their knowledge of managing stakeholders through a more strategic view of project management.

Apprentices use 'live' projects proposed by their employers during their on- and off-the-job training. They explore and extend their knowledge and skills in their off-the-job training and use this learning to enhance the project. Apprentices' managers provide highly effective support for them so that they can further hone their new skills. For example, apprentices deepen their understanding of financial management concepts in their workplace by leading on periodic finance reviews for their companies.

Employers are closely involved in reviewing the progress that apprentices make. They attend quarterly review sessions with the apprentice and the tutor. Apprentices reflect on the knowledge and skills they have developed between the review sessions and how that links to their job role. Apprentices relish the ambitious targets they are set to extend their learning further.

Apprentices are clear about their career plans. They articulate clearly the benefits of the transferrable skills that they are developing that will help them in whatever sector they want to work in the future.

Tutors check apprentices' learning in their training sessions skilfully. They draw out apprentices' previous learning and this helps apprentices secure concepts in their long-term memory. Apprentices produce written work of a high standard. Tutors mark this work meticulously and provide comprehensive feedback that helps the apprentices to understand what they have done well and what they need to improve.

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

Leaders and managers have ensured that they have a safeguarding policy and procedures in place which are understood thoroughly by all staff. Two senior staff have completed relevant training to fulfil the role of designated safeguarding lead. However, links with external agencies are not in place to ensure that they are keeping up to date with current local and national risks.

Other staff have attended appropriate training and benefit from opportunities to discuss and share their approach to keeping apprentices safe in different employment sectors. Apprentices feel safe in their workplace and know how to raise any concerns.

Apprentices have an appropriate understanding of the risks of radicalisation. For example, apprentices who work in the defence sector have had training on how to identify and notify different types of threat markers. Apprentices highlight how they develop their understanding of British values, such as diversity and inclusion, when developing project proposals.

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