

Brunel University London

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Steve Lambert, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Higher education institution
Address:	Kingston Lane Uxbridge UB8 3PH

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.

The university teaches advanced clinical practice apprenticeships at level 7 and nursing associate apprenticeships at level 5. At the time of the visit, there were 8 apprentices on these programmes.

During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions, managers and tutors adapted much of the curriculum, so that they could teach all programmes online. At the time of the visit, staff taught all programmes through a combination of online and face-to-face classroom lessons.

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?

Reasonable progress

Leaders at the university show a strong commitment to develop apprenticeships alongside their existing programmes. The university has invested significantly in the launch of the apprenticeship programme. Managers have a clear strategy for this growth and development, building on well-established relationships with employers and staff with relevant expertise within the university.

Leaders have developed an apprenticeship programme that fulfils the requirements of the apprenticeship standards and fits well with the university's mission. Managers design courses that link strongly with employers' requirements. For example, managers have worked in conjunction with local National Health Service (NHS) trusts to ensure that the advanced clinical practice apprenticeship and the nursing associate apprenticeship meet the trust's demand for skilled staff.

Tutors who teach on the apprenticeship programmes are well-qualified and highly experienced in their respective fields. They maintain their registration with their

professional body and many of them continue to work in clinical practice or are active researchers. This ensures that tutors continue to be at the forefront of their profession.

Managers' approach to quality assurance is evolving. They have correctly identified the need to create greater consistency in practice between different academic divisions within the university. For example, they are taking action to standardise how staff monitor the progress apprentices make. They recognise how this will enable managers to access more consistent information on apprentices' performance.

The recently established apprenticeship quality board provides governance and oversight to the university's senate committee and governing council. The newly constituted board ensures that there is scrutiny of the apprenticeship provision and the appropriate challenge to apprenticeship leaders. Currently, there is nobody on the university council with specific oversight of the apprenticeship provision. However, plans are in place to rectify this.

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

Leaders and managers have worked jointly with employers to ensure that individuals recruited are suitable for the apprenticeship programme. Staff from the university and the employing NHS Trust jointly interview and assess applicants. As a result, apprentices are aware of the expectations and demands of the apprenticeship, and this contributes to them staying on the programme.

Managers and tutors design a curriculum that fits well with the apprentices' work commitments. Tutors have successfully adapted teaching during the COVID-19 restrictions, with a majority of all teaching moving online. This has helped reduce the impact of the restrictions on the apprentices' continued development.

Tutors structure the programme well. Apprentices' employers are aware of the order in which topics are going to be taught. This helps to ensure that apprentices gain theoretical knowledge during their days at university and can apply this knowledge while in the workplace. The apprentices particularly value this approach, and it helps them develop into confident practitioners.

Tutors support apprentices to develop the skills they need to be successful in their apprenticeship. For example, nursing associate apprentices feel more confident communicating with patients. They have also acquired valuable skills, such as administering intramuscular injections, and increased their understanding of the major systems of the body. Apprentices become confident in applying their knowledge in the workplace.

Apprentices talk confidently about how the knowledge, skills and behaviours learned have helped them gain greater recognition in the workplace. This has been seen by apprentices' employers, who have witnessed apprentices grow in confidence and skill.

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

The university has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, and suitable staff in safeguarding roles, including oversight by senior leaders. Apprentices feel safe. Most know what action to take should they have any concerns.

Employers appreciate the support and guidance they receive from university staff to help assure the welfare and safety of apprentices. They speak positively about the personal and pastoral support that apprentices receive. They are particularly appreciative of the staff at the university who provided significant additional support to apprentices during the pandemic.

Staff and students are all suitably trained on understanding the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Staff at the university have strong links with local networks, including the Hillingdon 'Prevent' duty partnership board and the Metropolitan Police. They use these links effectively to ensure that they are well informed about any possible risks or threats to apprentices in the area.

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