

# Leeds Beckett University

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.

Leeds Beckett University provides a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in a range of sectors. It has been training apprentices since 2017. Apprenticeship provision is offered in three schools within the university. They are the school of the built environment, engineering and computing, the school of health, and the Leeds Business School. The university subcontracts a small amount of training in functional skills English and mathematics to another provider.

At the time of the visit, there were just under 1,000 apprentices in learning. Most apprentices study at level 6, with the higher enrolments in civil engineering, chartered surveyor, chartered manager and building services design engineer. Just under 100 apprentices study the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship. At level 7, there were around 80 apprentices on programmes in senior leader, advanced clinical practitioner and chartered town planner. Apprentices make up around 4% of the university's student population.

### Themes

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

#### **Insufficient progress**

Senior leaders do not have a consistently effective approach to the development of apprenticeship provision. In the Leeds Business School, leaders develop a curriculum that meets the needs of employers and apprentices. However, in the other two schools where apprenticeships are provided, there is a lack of understanding of the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Consequently, these schools have not developed a curriculum beyond the degree programme. They are therefore not providing sufficient training for apprentices to develop their skills and behaviours.

Governance arrangements are not effective. Members of the apprenticeship board do not receive sufficient information about the apprenticeship programme. They are therefore unable to provide effective scrutiny and challenge. The board receives information about the numbers of apprentices who complete the degree element of

the apprenticeship, but does not receive enough information about the number of apprentices who are still to complete their end-point assessments. Most level 6 civil engineering apprentices have not completed their apprenticeship on time. Plans for these apprentices to complete their programmes are ineffective.

Senior leaders work effectively with agencies such as Leeds City Council and the COVID-19 recovery task group. They use information from this liaison to determine the provision needed in the local area. The level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship has been developed in response to meeting healthcare needs in the region. The level 6 civil engineering apprenticeship is provided to meet the skills shortage of civil engineers nationally and internationally.

Leaders have accurately identified most of the weaknesses in their apprenticeship provision and have plans to rectify most of the weaknesses. They now have a more rigorous recruitment process in order to reduce the number of apprentices who leave their programme early. However, leaders have been too slow to make improvements in a few areas where they have identified weaknesses in their provision, such as the significant delays to end-point assessments for civil engineering apprentices.

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

Leaders do not coordinate on- and off-the-job training effectively. Staff at the university do not have enough awareness of what civil engineering apprentices do in their jobs. These apprentices are not supported to gain relevant experience at work to meet the requirements of the end-point assessment and the professional body accreditation. Level 5 nursing associate apprentices specialising in mental health or paediatrics follow the same curriculum as those on adult nursing. As a result, these apprentices do not gain the knowledge that they need to be successful in the workplace.

Leaders do not identify well enough what apprentices already know and what they need to learn at the beginning of the apprenticeship. Level 6 civil engineering apprentices start the apprenticeship in year 2 if they already hold a relevant qualification. However, there is no modification to the curriculum for apprentices who already have significant experience in the sector. Level 7 senior leader apprentices complete an assessment of their knowledge, skills and behaviours at the start of the programme, but it is not revisited during the apprenticeship. Consequently, a few apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Apprentices gain new knowledge from the degree and master's degree components of their apprenticeship. For example, level 6 civil engineers learn how to manually design drainage suds. This helps them to understand errors in software when designing drainage suds digitally at work. Level 7 senior leader apprentices learn

how to lead innovative projects, including how to take appropriate strategic decisions.

Academic staff are highly qualified and have appropriate industry experience to deliver their academic subjects. On the level 7 senior leader programme, staff use their industry experience in both the public and private sectors to exemplify key concepts. However, new staff who are working specifically with apprentices have not carried out sufficient training to enable them to support apprentices to make sustained progress.

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

Apprentices feel safe. They know who to contact both in the workplace and at the university if they have any concerns. Apprentices value the support from staff, who considered their needs during the pandemic. Staff are sympathetic towards individual circumstances such as bereavement. This helps apprentices to remain on programme.

Leaders have appropriate procedures in place for safeguarding and well-being referrals. They carefully monitor apprentices who self-refer for support. Apprentices who require support for their mental health can access a range of services at the university, such as trained counsellors and mentors. University staff signpost apprentices to external agencies that deal with specific issues, such as relationship counselling and debt management.

Leaders provide training for apprentices on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. However, as this training is only carried out at the start of the programme, most apprentices are unable to recall in detail what they learned.

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