

# Inspection of London Design and Engineering UTC

Inspection dates:

1–3 February 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

London Design and Engineering University Technical College (LDE UTC) is an independent learning provider based in the London Borough of Newham. This inspection report relates solely to the UTC's apprenticeship provision. Ofsted inspected the full-time provision at the UTC for learners aged 14 to 19 in October 2018 under the school inspection framework.

LDE UTC has offered engineering-related apprenticeships since 2017. At the time of the inspection, there were 38 apprentices in learning, all following apprenticeship standards. Some 25 of these were on standards at level 3, including 12 apprentices studying the digital engineering technician standard and seven the civil engineering technician standard. A small minority of apprentices were studying engineering technician, engineering design and draughtsperson, and maintenance and operations engineering standards. The remaining 13 learners were studying a degree apprenticeship at level 6 through a subcontracting arrangement with the University of East London. Of these, 11 were studying the civil engineer (degree) standard, and the remaining two were studying the geo-spatial mapping and science specialist (degree) standard.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

The level 3 standards apprenticeship taught by the provider is designed effectively in partnership with both employers and apprentices. This ensures that apprentices learn the knowledge and skills that they need for their jobs. Consequently, the large majority of level 3 apprentices achieve and move on to further study upon completion of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices at level 3 are positive about their apprenticeship and enjoy learning on a modern, diverse campus. Apprentices study and work in a diverse area of London and demonstrate consistently high levels of respect for staff, peers and other campus users.

Apprentices at level 6 are less positive about their apprenticeship. While they value the opportunity to study a degree apprenticeship in engineering on a part-time basis, they cannot identify how the subcontractor, or the provider, has supported them through the broader aspects of an apprenticeship programme.

Apprentices report feeling safe, and they know where to go if they need help. Apprentices at level 3 receive health and well-being support from the provider directly, while apprentices at level 6 receive support from the subcontractor, as offered to all university students.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers have developed an engineering curriculum that aligns well with the strategic priorities of the UTC, and with the needs of local and national employers. They have developed strategic partnerships with national employers and their university sponsor. These partnerships help to inform leaders of changes in these priorities and to develop a deeper understanding of the skills shortages faced in the engineering sector.

Teachers of apprenticeships at both levels are well qualified in their specialist subjects. Leaders offer appropriate training for teachers of level 3 apprentices to develop their teaching skills. For example, teachers have attended training in supporting vulnerable learners, and retrieval and retention of learning.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that their improvement actions on the level 3 provision focus sharply enough on improving the quality of education. For example, leaders and managers are aware of the need to improve the quality of feedback to learners on their work, but this is not highlighted in their improvement plan. As a result, managers and staff are not always clear about what they need to do to improve the quality of the apprenticeships they offer.

Governors do not have a sufficient understanding of apprenticeship programmes to challenge the quality of all aspects of the provision. As a result, they do not provide

appropriate support or challenge to leaders and managers to identify and address fully the improvements needed.

Leaders do not obtain sufficiently detailed information from their subcontractor to monitor effectively apprentices' progress or the quality of the teaching. As a result, they have not taken steps to ensure that the curriculum for level 6 apprentices extends beyond the delivery of the degree qualification and fully meets the requirements of an apprenticeship programme.

Teaching staff review the level 3 curriculum at suitable points throughout the year, and managers allocate time for staff to develop the curriculum. Staff check that the content of the level 3 apprenticeship is appropriate and amend the course to meet employers' needs. For example, they added in course content on road safety on the level 3 programme to meet the needs of apprentices who work as highway engineers. As a result, apprentices develop skills relevant to the sectors in which they work.

Staff plan the level 3 apprenticeship curriculum well to ensure that apprentices learn new knowledge, skills and behaviours and build on these over time. However, teachers focus on teaching apprentices the knowledge they need to achieve the pass grade criteria only. Staff do not place sufficient emphasis on challenging apprentices to achieve high grades both during their programme, and in their final assessments.

Across all programmes, coaches do not sufficiently involve employers in reviews of apprentices' progress. Most employers are not aware of the progress apprentices make, and so cannot effectively plan learning, or set challenging targets for apprentices. As a result, apprentices do not have the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the workplace.

Managers have not ensured that apprentices have a sufficiently detailed understanding of how they will be assessed at the end of their apprenticeship, or of the different grades that they can achieve. As a result, too many apprentices are underprepared for their assessments and do not aspire to achieve the higher grades that are available to them.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices receive sufficient time during working hours to complete their studies. Most apprentices attend lessons at the UTC or university during working hours. However, too few apprentices receive the further time needed to be able to complete work set for independent study or assignment writing. As a result, too many apprentices must use their own time to complete such work.

Teachers support apprentices with additional needs well. For the very few apprentices who need this support, teachers arrange one-to-one sessions to help ensure they remain on track. They also arrange laptops, dyslexia testing, and for apprentices to have additional time in exams where appropriate. Managers liaise with employers of level 3 apprentices to agree any necessary reasonable adjustments to their workplace. As a result, learners with additional needs made similar progress to those who do not receive additional support.

Leaders have ensured that apprentices studying at level 3 receive appropriate advice and guidance to inform them of the opportunities available upon completion of their apprenticeship. Employers and managers promote well the available career pathways and opportunities to study at a higher level. Most level 3 apprentices move on to higher education, including degree-level apprenticeships.

Leaders have designed a 'learning for life' tutorial programme, which supports apprentices with their health and well-being. This programme forms part of the timetable for apprentices at level 3. However, for level 6 apprentices, the additional module on mental health is not promoted sufficiently well. Few apprentices have completed this module and the development of level 6 apprentices' understanding of these topics is not covered within their reviews.

At level 3, apprentices develop an appropriate understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, and life in modern Britain. However, not all apprentices are aware of specific threats in the areas in which they work and live, and as a result, are not always sure how to keep themselves safe from these. At level 6, most apprentices can recall little of what they were taught about these issues.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have implemented appropriate policies and practices to keep apprentices safe, including from sexual harm and sexual abuse. Staff are clear about the lines of reporting and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has links with appropriate agencies for the referral of apprentices, should they require support. The DSL is highly knowledgeable about the local risks to all UTC learners and liaises with appropriate networks to stay up to date with concerns that may pose risks to apprentices.

Governors have appropriate expertise to support and challenge leaders to keep learners safe, and they meet their statutory responsibilities. They are up to date with current legislation and are proactive in identifying further training to improve their knowledge.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders must ensure that the subcontractor meets its obligation to teach level 6 apprentices a full curriculum that meets the principles of an apprenticeship.
- Leaders must ensure that the curriculum they offer at level 3 enables apprentices to develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours to achieve high grades.
- Leaders must ensure that all apprentices receive their entitlement to time during working hours to complete their studies.

- Leaders must ensure that apprentices' reviews take into account all aspects of their learning, including the views of employers, and that these are used effectively to set targets that give apprentices the opportunity to make progress.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2527508
<b>Address</b>	15 University Way London E16 2RD
<b>Contact number</b>	020 3019 7333
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ldeutc.co.uk">www.ldeutc.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal</b>	Geoffrey Fowler
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	University of East London

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of apprenticeships, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Stuart Collett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Jennings	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Conway	Ofsted Inspector
David Baber	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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