

# The Dyson Institute

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 2691304

**Name of lead inspector:** Nick Crombie, His Majesty's Inspector

**Inspection dates:** 27 and 28 September 2022

**Type of provider:** Employer

**Address:** Dyson Institute of Engineering and  
Technology  
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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.

The Dyson Institute was awarded new degree awarding powers in October 2020. Its first cohort of apprenticeships joined in September 2021 and a second in September 2022. At the time of this monitoring visit, 81 apprentices were registered with the institute, including four taking a break in learning. The institute is located in the UK headquarters of Dyson Technology in Malmesbury, Wiltshire.

The institute offers the level 6 product development and design engineer non-integrated degree standard as a four-year programme. All apprentices are employed full time. Their programme involves two days each working week on site participating in lectures, laboratory work, tutorials or self-study. They spend the remaining three days in the workplace working on live projects.

First year apprentices are accommodated in purpose-built halls of residence on the Dyson campus. In subsequent years, they find accommodation locally. Apprentices' workplace locations in Dyson depend on which aspect of the standard they are studying.

Around 40% of the first cohort and 35% of the second are female. A fifth of each cohort is from a minority ethnic background. All apprentices are between 18 and 20 years of age.

### Themes

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

**Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have devised and implemented an ambitious, rich and effective curriculum. Apprentices are being equipped well for their careers in Dyson and the wider world of engineering. The curriculum is designed well to ensure apprentices progressively develop and apply an extensive set of new skills,

knowledge and behaviours. From the outset, apprentices play an integral, practical role in achieving the company's core aims of designing and developing unique technologies and products. Overall, the curriculum meets the business needs of Dyson and the varied professional and personal goals of its apprentices.

The curriculum content is planned effectively to ensure that apprentices develop a broad knowledge and deep understanding of engineering principles during their first two years. Apprentices value this approach. Every six months, apprentices rotate to one of four modules in either electronics, mechanical engineering, software or new product innovation. The breadth of the knowledge they learn is designed to provide a strong foundation on which they build their specialist engineering roles in the third and fourth years.

The apprentices selected for the degree programme fit well into Dyson's team-based, creative and technology-led approach. Managers' searching interview and assessment process successfully explores potential apprentices' engineering skills, but also their complementary talents, such as effective team working and creativity. Many apprentices are also accomplished artists or skilled musicians. Apprentices are excited that there are now enough musicians to form a Dyson Institute 'big band'.

Leaders, managers and council members use data and feedback from apprentices, managers, teaching and support staff well to identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Consequently, leaders modify the curriculum to make improvements. The well-qualified and experienced members of the council receive copious performance data and use it well to hold the institute's leaders and managers to account. Leaders are revising the role and membership of the institute's academic board to strengthen the link between academic and operational activities.

**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**

Apprentices' induction to their apprenticeship is extensive and thorough. It features sessions on topics including safeguarding, maintaining sexual health, fundamental British values, a fresher's fair and cookery lessons, so apprentices can prepare healthy meals in their halls of residence. The most recent apprentice intake were delighted at how quickly they had bonded as a cohesive, friendly and supportive group during their induction.

Tutors and staff liaise very effectively with apprentices' line managers and mentors to plan apprentice activities in the workplace. Consequently, apprentices achieve their required learning outcomes quickly. They display a highly positive attitude to their classroom studies and the workplace. Line managers value the contribution apprentices make to their team and project work. Apprentices enjoy and appreciate

working on real commercial projects, most of which are highly confidential. Apprentices also learn specific technical skills, such as the python programming language used during their study of the module in software.

Leaders have appointed well-qualified tutors who are industry or subject-matter experts. Apprentices welcome having access to this depth of sector knowledge and recognise that their tutors embody the high standards apprentices are expected to achieve. Apprentices are taught in large and small groups in capacious training rooms using a good range of teaching methods. Apprentices work in very well-equipped laboratories and workstations. They have good access to quiet areas for reflection and independent study.

Apprentices' coursework is appropriately complex. It clearly demonstrates their ability to apply knowledge, skills and behaviours successfully to the projects they work on. They know how to keep themselves safe and have a good theoretical and practical understanding of health and safety requirements in their workplaces.

Apprentices continue learning throughout the year outside of their academic terms. For example, a summer series of events and practical activities helped apprentices moving from year one to year two to successfully develop their communication, technical, team working and leadership skills. Apprentices highly value the learning activities they experienced during the summer period.

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

Leaders, managers, teachers and support staff pay close attention to maintaining apprentices' well-being. They have introduced a range of internal and external support services, such as counselling, which apprentices use routinely to help manage or overcome their work-, learning- or domestic-related issues.

Trained designated safeguarding staff follow appropriate procedures and deal promptly with any safeguarding incident reported. Support staff maintain a confidential risk register and provide targeted support for any apprentice identified at risk of failing or falling behind. Apprentices have a good knowledge of safeguarding generally, including who to contact about any concerns.

Apprentices' line managers routinely receive training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty, but until recently mentors had not. Leaders had noted this discrepancy and initiated training for mentors, which is ongoing. During our visit, leaders identified that arrangements for vetting new staff had not always been implemented fully. Leaders' response was immediate, including producing risk assessments and initiating Disclosure and Barring Service checks for the small number of staff affected.

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