

# University of Manchester

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.

The University of Manchester began to recruit apprentices funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency from January 2019. There are currently 419 apprentices on the level 7 senior leader apprenticeship standard. All apprentices are aged 19 and over. A significant number of apprentices are employed in National Health Service trusts. Apprentices are based in various locations across the country.

### 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 a sound rationale for the introduction of apprenticeships into the university's portfolio. They form an important part of the university's widening participation strategy. Leaders want apprentices to reach their potential through lifelong and flexible learning.

Leaders are aware of the leadership skills gaps that exist across the regional and national economies. They are passionate about improving the skills of leaders and ensure the curriculum meets employers' needs. For example, apprentices work closely with their employers on work-based projects. These projects help employers to resolve business issues or to develop new processes or products.

Lecturers and tutors have developed an ambitious curriculum for apprentices to study. The apprenticeship programme is rigorous in its academic content and practical application. There is a strong focus on developing authentic leadership behaviours. For example, tutors embed 'three golden threads' for effective healthcare leadership. This includes a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, leading for improvement and being patient centred. This allows apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to progress into senior leadership positions.

Leaders provide detailed and effective training plans for apprentices and employers. Apprentices value the opportunities that they gain as a result of the apprenticeship. These include being able to use competitive strategies and entrepreneurialism to attract new employees to their business.

Employers value the apprenticeship and the skills that their employees bring to their workplace. They value university managers' responsiveness to their needs. A few employers say they would appreciate more regular feedback on their apprentices' progress.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices have access to high-quality training and resources. University staff have experience of working in senior leadership roles. This means that they can contextualise leadership theory in practice. Managers subcontract English and mathematics functional skills training to another provider for the small number of apprentices who need to achieve these qualifications. Almost all apprentices achieve their English and mathematics qualifications on time.

Managers use effective quality assurance systems to review the training that apprentices receive. Leaders are aware of the strengths of the programme. They have clear and decisive plans in place to rectify areas for improvement. Leaders hold managers to account through comprehensive governance arrangements.

**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 develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship. They learn about leadership concepts that they use in the workplace. For instance, they explore structured tools and techniques to aid effective team working. They use these with their teams to develop their performance.

Tutors and lecturers are skilful in their teaching. They provide challenge and support to encourage apprentices' learning and professional development. Tutors apply key concepts to apprentices' workplaces using their own leadership experiences. They set apprentices independent research to help them develop their knowledge further.

Tutors and lecturers work together well to develop the curriculum and ensure it is of a high standard. They plan the curriculum in a logical order. This helps apprentices to build their knowledge, skills and behaviours effectively. On the healthcare pathway, apprentices first develop their core leadership skills. This includes how to build staff engagement and develop high performance in teams. They then move on to financial management and learn how to use strategies such as financial modelling and identifying trends.

Managers check that apprentices can cope with the demands of the apprenticeship. They assess apprentices' prior learning and experiences at the start of the

programme. Tutors use this information effectively, to adapt the curriculum to meet apprentices' needs. They revisit it as part of apprentices' progress reviews. Tutors review apprentices' progress effectively. They set specific targets for apprentices to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices work well with work-based mentors to plan their workplace training.

Tutors and lecturers use well-devised assessments to develop apprentices' knowledge and understanding. There is a strong focus on the importance of developing reflective practice to promote apprentices' self-improvement.

Tutors and lecturers provide apprentices with detailed and developmental feedback on their assignments. For example, lecturers ensure that apprentices use references accurately and that they write in an academic style.

Tutors prepare apprentices effectively for their final assessment. They provide apprentices with opportunities to experience professional discussions and take mock tests. This ensures that apprentices develop the skills that they will be expected to demonstrate in their final assessments. So far, over three-quarters of apprentices have received merit or distinction grades.

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

Leaders and managers have put in place a range of procedures to help keep apprentices safe. This includes when apprentices attend the university and when they work online.

Leaders have appointed a senior member of staff as the designated safeguarding lead. There are appropriate procedures in place for reporting and dealing with safeguarding incidents, which staff comply with.

University staff undertake appropriate checks before they recruit staff to work with apprentices. They ensure that apprentices have access to a range of support services should they need them. This includes academic advisers, counselling services and a range of multi-faith groups.

Leaders are taking reasonable steps to meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. However, a few apprentices do not recall any training on the risks associated with radicalisation or extremism.

Apprentices feel safe. They know how to report any safeguarding or welfare concerns. Apprentices particularly appreciate the use of action learning sets on their programme. These provide them with a safe space to discuss issues relating to their workplace.

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