

# University College London

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.

University College London (UCL) is a large university based in the London Borough of Camden. It teaches a wide range of higher education programmes, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, as well as postgraduate degree apprenticeships. UCL offers apprenticeship programmes exclusively at level 7 to 183 apprentices on standards-based programmes. The largest standard taught is the clinical associate in psychology. They also teach the senior leader, chartered town planner, systems engineer and advanced clinical practitioner (ophthalmology) standards.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have developed an effective curriculum. They teach higher-level apprenticeships in areas where there are significant skills gaps, such as in ophthalmology where there are too few practitioners in the health service to meet growing patient demand.

After a period of leadership instability, university managers have recently appointed new leaders for the apprenticeship provision. These new leaders have developed clear plans on how to improve the provision further. They have recently started to provide more useful information to members of the governance board. As a result, governors are getting the information they need to challenge leaders effectively to make improvements.

Leaders ensure that most apprentices receive their entitlement to training away from the workplace. As a result, apprentices get the time they need outside of work to learn the theory that underpins their jobs, for example through residential workshops. However, a few apprentices struggle with their workload. A few

ophthalmology apprentices cover clinics at short notice which conflicts with the time they need to complete their training.

Leaders ensure that apprentices work in appropriate senior roles that align well with the level 7 standards. Leaders check that apprentices will find the content challenging enough, based on what they already know and can do. As a result, apprentices develop substantial new knowledge.

Leaders involve employers effectively in the design of the curriculum. For example, on the senior leader apprenticeship, lecturers and the main employer have worked together to develop a transformation module, as this is a critical area for the business. As a result, the curriculum prepares apprentices effectively for the workplace roles that they undertake.

Leaders do not check standards of teaching effectively enough. As a result, they are not clear on which lecturers need to develop their teaching skills further. This means that staff's development is not targeted to focus enough on individual lecturers' specific areas for development.

**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 ensure that they sequence the curriculum logically. This helps apprentices to remember more of what they are taught. For example, ophthalmology apprentices start by learning about gross anatomy and physiology. As the apprenticeship progresses, they build on this by learning related complex topics such as understanding the layers of the retina.

Lecturers support apprentices to develop further their mathematics skills. For example, apprentices develop a good understanding of interpreting statistical data. As a result, apprentices' confidence in reading scientific papers improves.

Lecturers are leading subject experts who are very well qualified in their specialist areas. They draw well on this expertise when explaining complex topics in lectures and seminars.

The quality of feedback that lecturers give apprentices on their assessed work is too variable and not consistently good. As a result, apprentices are not always sufficiently clear about how to improve the standard of academic assessments.

The standard of apprentices' practical work is high. Most apprentices can apply relevant concepts to the context of their jobs. For example, chartered town planner apprentices understand how the street environment needs to be safe for the public when they consider planning projects.

Apprentices meet regularly with their assessor and employer to review their progress. However, the targets apprentices are set in progress reviews are too broad. They are not helpful enough for apprentices, because they do not identify the steps they need to take to improve specific areas of knowledge, skills or behaviours.

Apprentices benefit from having access to a range of high-quality learning resources. Apprentices can also access a wide range of extra courses on the virtual learning platform. For example, apprentices can access courses on academic writing for dissertations and assessments. This supports apprentices to develop further their writing skills.

The vast majority of apprentices who start their apprenticeship stay on their programme until the end and go on to achieve their qualification.

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

Leaders have developed a supportive culture. Apprentices are able to access a wide range of support for their mental health, such as through employee assistance helplines and counselling. As a result, apprentices have access to services to improve their well-being.

Leaders ensure that the designated safeguarding lead is well trained to undertake their role effectively. They also ensure that staff involved in the programme receive safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training, so they know the steps they need to take if they become aware of safeguarding concerns.

Leaders have developed an appropriate safeguarding policy that applies to all degree apprentices. This contains information about what support is available to apprentices. There is clear guidance about how staff, apprentices or employers can raise concerns to the safeguarding team.

Staff provide learners with safeguarding information at induction. However, as this is not sufficiently repeated, too few apprentices remember what they covered in these sessions.

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