

# Inspection of BPP Actuarial Education Limited

Inspection dates:

15 to 17 November 2022

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

**Information about this provider**

BPP Actuarial Education Limited (BPP) forms part of the BPP group of companies, which is involved in a broad cross section of education and training activities in the UK and abroad. Apprentices are based in London and throughout the country. BPP provides apprenticeship programmes that help employers develop the talents and skills of their actuary workforce who use mathematical and statistical skills to assess the probability and risks to businesses. At the time of the inspection, there were 38 apprentices on the actuarial technician standard at level 4 and 441 on the actuary level 7 standard. All apprentices are over 18 years of age. The training is delivered online and face to face.

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

Apprentices value their education and training. They have high attendance in lessons. This is because tutors set high expectations at the start of programmes. Apprentices have a positive attitude to their learning and development.

Apprentices enjoy the training and say they would recommend it to their peers. Apprentices value the career progression they have, ranging from coding and processing roles, to learning about tasks such as pensions valuations and then mentoring and line managing a team. Most apprentices who complete their training secure promotion at work or progress to a higher level qualification.

Apprentices profit from a positive and purposeful learning environment. Tutors use a good range of methods that support apprentices to engage well. For example, during online lessons, tutors use chat facilities and regular polls to good effect. Consequently, apprentices engage fully in their training sessions.

Apprentices receive good teaching and support from tutors and coaches, who are well qualified and experts in actuary. Tutors and coaches use their actuarial knowledge to good effect so that apprentices understand key concepts and apply their knowledge in the workplace.

Apprentices grow in confidence as they develop new technical skills that they apply in their jobs. Employers identify positive changes in apprentices' attitudes over the course of the training. Apprentices become valued team members and demonstrate high levels of professionalism. As a result, many are given additional responsibilities at work.

Apprentices benefit from a safe learning environment. They know who to speak to if they need support for their welfare. Apprentices receive good support from the mental health first aiders and counsellors when needed. This helps apprentices develop strategies to better manage the challenges they face and remain in learning.

Apprentices find balancing the demands of work and training a challenge. Leaders and managers have introduced several changes to the training to ensure that apprentices are able to stay on track with their learning. As a result, most apprentices make the progress expected of them. However, a few apprentices are behind in their studies.

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

Leaders and managers work effectively with professional bodies and employers to design an ambitious curriculum. This ensures that the curriculum is closely aligned to professional standards, and, in time, apprentices gain associate status as

actuaries. As a result, the apprenticeship programmes meet the needs of the actuary industry well.

Tutors and coaches teach well-planned and sequenced programmes. Tutors teach apprentices foundation topics before moving on to more complex theory. For example, actuarial technician apprentices learn about essential regulatory compliance before moving on to more advanced statistical concepts. Teachers make difficult topics clear to apprentices, such as by demonstrating how to use formulae before apprentices apply these to questions they are set. As a result, apprentices accrue secure knowledge over time.

Tutors use assessment very effectively to check that apprentices remember what they have been taught. For example, tutors use a variety of questioning techniques skilfully. They make good use of an online polling system to ascertain what apprentices know and can do and whether they need support with any gaps in their understanding. Tutors provide highly constructive feedback on apprentices' work. Tutors' feedback helps apprentices to know what they have done well, what they need to improve and to produce work of a high standard.

Coaches provide apprentices with good support during the one-to-one coaching sessions. They encourage apprentices to link what they learn in their off-the-job training to what they do at work. Tutors and coaches provide apprentices with additional needs with extra reviews, bespoke resources and additional time to complete examinations. As a result, apprentices understand how to apply the theory they learn at work, making good progress.

Apprentices develop skills that help them to become effective in their actuarial work. For example, they are better able to delegate work to junior colleagues and check the work they delegate. They become more independent and solution focused in their work.

Tutors and coaches use high-quality resources that apprentices utilise to good effect in their independent study. For example, they produce helpful pre-reading and handouts prior to sessions. Apprentices have access to virtual learning environments and online webinars, which they use to prepare for their sessions and recap on their learning. For example, they use the resources to practise and remember complex mathematical concepts.

Tutors prepare apprentices well for their final assessments. For example, coaches frequently discuss final assessments at progress reviews. Tutors set apprentices practise activities to help prepare. As a result, a high proportion of apprentices pass their final assessments and achieve high grades.

Leaders and managers ensure that there is comprehensive careers advice and guidance available for apprentices. However, too few apprentices are aware of the careers support available and are reliant on information provided by their employer. As a result, apprentices do not receive sufficient independent guidance on the career opportunities available to them.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development at BPP. They take effective action to improve the provision. For example, they identified that the first cohort of apprentices did not receive enough support when they fell behind, and they have subsequently put in place timely support for apprentices to complete their portfolios. They have put in place additional support for apprentices who need to re-sit their exams. These actions are having a positive impact on the progress that apprentices make.

Leaders and managers recognise the need to improve the proportion of actuarial apprentices who stay to the end of their training. They have a sound understanding of the reasons for the high dropout rate, which is related to significant challenges within the actuarial industry. They have taken appropriate steps to improve the proportion of apprentices who complete their studies. As a result, a high proportion of apprentices now remain in learning.

Governance arrangements are effective. Those responsible for governance are very experienced professionals. They use data very effectively to understand and analyse the training. They meet frequently to provide accountability and challenge to managers on the performance of the apprenticeship programme.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers, including governors, ensure that a strong safeguarding culture is in place. They have very good oversight of safeguarding apprentices because they frequently analyse information about safeguarding concerns.

Designated safeguarding leads bring good experience to their role. When they need to take action to support apprentices' welfare, they do so very effectively. They are vigilant in their support of apprentices and secure external support for them if needed.

Apprentices recognise the importance of keeping themselves safe online. They attend online safety programmes, both at work and as part of their apprenticeship. As a result, most are aware of the signs and symptoms of online radicalisation.

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

- Leaders and managers should ensure that all apprentices receive effective support to keep them on track with their learning and successfully complete their apprenticeship.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that apprentices receive effective careers advice and guidance on the next steps in their career.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1278675
<b>Address</b>	Aldine House 142–144 Uxbridge Road London W12 8AA
<b>Contact number</b>	01235 550005
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bpp.com/courses/actuary">www.bpp.com/courses/actuary</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Graham Gaddes
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	N/A

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of apprenticeship quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit 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

Jon Bowman, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Eileen O'Gara	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Manning	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Finn	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Lambert	His Majesty's 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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