

London Metropolitan University

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Jane Hughes, His Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Higher Education Institution

Address: 166 - 220 Holloway Road
London
N7 8DB

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.

London Metropolitan University is based in central London. They gained a direct contract to offer apprenticeships in March 2020. At the time of the monitoring visit, the university had 16 apprentices enrolled on the level 7 architect (integrated degree) apprenticeship standard. All apprentices were over 19-years old.

The university does not work with any subcontractors.

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 a clear rationale for their apprenticeship programme: to widen participation and to close the skills gap in architecture. The apprenticeship allows those who have completed a first degree in architecture an alternative to complete the next stages in their registration to become a fully qualified architect. Leaders have used their extensive knowledge and experience in teaching architecture degrees to map their curriculum effectively to the apprenticeship standard.

Apprentices are recruited appropriately. They work in relevant job roles and with companies where they apply what they have learned. Leaders work closely with employers to ensure that they fully understand their commitment to their apprentices. Employers consider apprentices' university deadlines when setting apprentices' work deadlines. They adjust these to reduce pressure on apprentices. Employers create opportunities such as work shadowing and foreign trips to complement apprentices' training. Employers recognise the benefits of the apprenticeship programme to their business.

Leaders have recently added additional staff to support apprentices. Staff understand the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. Lecturers and many support

staff have extensive knowledge and experience in the sector. Many still work as architects and are members of the Royal Institute of British Architects. This helps them keep up to date with new and changing trends in design. Leaders have made appropriate arrangements for the small minority of apprentices who need to complete qualifications in English and mathematics.

Leaders have appropriate quality assurance processes in place for the academic element of the apprenticeship programme. They have recently implemented a range of committees to oversee the performance and quality of the programme. They have a good understanding of the areas for development and a comprehensive and clear action plan in place. They have sensible plans to check the quality of apprentices' experience across the whole programme. However, they have not yet implemented these plans.

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 have considered carefully the content and structure of the apprenticeship programme. The academic content is taught in line with the degree programme and is logical. For example, in year one, lecturers teach apprentices about small design project skills and communication. They follow this with information about materials, structures and structural diagrams. In subsequent years, apprentices learn about more complex innovative design. They complete intensive design projects. Alongside this, apprentices complete personal development reviews. This helps them identify the specific knowledge, skills and behaviours they gain and apply at work.

Apprentices understand well how their knowledge builds in complexity over time. They know what to expect in each year of study and the assessment points. They remember and recall what they have learned well. For example, apprentices clearly explain the historical significance of buildings and why they should be preserved or demolished. They appreciate the importance of using sustainable construction methods in design projects.

Apprentices benefit from a range of external guest speakers in their lectures. This gives them further insight into the different types of architecture design and enriches their learning. Lecturers present and explain technical content clearly. Employers state that apprentices gain in confidence as a result of their training. Apprentices instigate discussions to introduce different types of design in their workplace.

Lecturers mostly give apprentices clear and helpful feedback on their written assessed work. This confirms what they have done well and the areas for development. This helps apprentices improve their work. Apprentices' work is of a high standard. They produce well-written and technically illustrated reports.

Staff collect information about apprentices' prior knowledge and skills at the start of the programme. Apprentices identify their strengths and weaknesses. However, staff do not sufficiently discuss or test apprentices' assessment of their knowledge and skills. Staff do not use the information effectively enough to plan apprentices' individual programmes and to set short-term goals. As a result, it is not clear how much progress apprentices make based on their starting points.

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

Leaders and staff have created a positive safeguarding culture. Leaders have put in place appropriate arrangements for safeguarding adult apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead and staff supporting the apprenticeship programme have completed relevant training in safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to identify and report potential safeguarding concerns.

Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe. They understand well the specific health and safety concerns within their sector. For example, they know the dangers associated with working on building sites. Apprentices understand how to keep safe online. They know about the dangers associated with extremism and radicalisation. They know whom to report any concerns to.

Apprentices have access to the full range of support services at the university. This includes the counselling service, financial support service and support for additional learning needs. However, on occasion, apprentices have had to wait too long to access these services.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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