

# Inspection of The Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation

Inspection dates:

7 to 9 December 2022

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

**Information about this provider**

The Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation, known as the IRRV, is the professional membership body for those working within the revenues and benefits profession. They offer professional training and qualifications to members. The provider specialises in one apprenticeship, the level 4 revenue and welfare benefits practitioner standard. The IRRV provided input into the development and assessment plan of this standard after consultation with its members. The provider has offered this apprenticeship since 2019 and currently has 99 apprentices on programme.

Apprentices work within local authorities across the country. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, all provider staff now work remotely from home. Most apprentices also work remotely or have a hybrid working model, working for some time in the office and some time at home. All training is delivered online, except for a very small amount of face-to-face support for individual apprentices.

IRRV subcontract the teaching of English and mathematics qualifications to Runway Apprenticeships Limited.

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

Apprentices develop their confidence as they progress through the apprenticeship. Their confidence in their knowledge and abilities enables apprentices to communicate clearly and effectively with others. This enables them to deal effectively with complex issues at work.

Apprentices are valued by their tutors and employers as individuals, and strong professional relationships are built between these partners. Apprentices are confident to discuss issues they have with their tutors and workplace mentors, who know them and support them well. Staff support apprentices' well-being very effectively, taking time to discuss this in monthly one-to-one review meetings and making appropriate adjustments for apprentices to help them stay on track.

Apprentices value the training they receive. Tutors set high expectations for apprentices' participation and contribution in training sessions, which apprentices respect. The online learning environment helps apprentices to learn, as tutors are inclusive, supportive and encouraging. As a result, apprentices feel comfortable to take part in searching discussions or give presentations to practise their skills.

Apprentices are committed to meeting high standards in their apprenticeship, and many plan to use their qualification to move into management positions. Almost all apprentices are thoroughly prepared for the next steps in their careers with their existing employer. However, while apprentices develop many valuable, transferrable skills throughout their apprenticeship, few are aware of the wider career opportunities available to them.

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

Leaders and managers have used their expert knowledge of the sector to plan an ambitious and well-constructed professional pathway for level 4 apprentices in revenues and welfare benefits. Leaders identified the need for specialist training and development of the workforce within local authorities and work with these employers in partnership very effectively.

Staff use their up-to-date knowledge of changes in legislation and policy to make important changes to the curriculum. This helps apprentices to become experts in their field. The programme is progressive and planned logically so that apprentices build their knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. For example, apprentices learn to resolve complex council tax issues and to advise customers accurately on appeals processes without needing to refer them to a senior manager.

Leaders ensure that each apprentice has a workplace mentor who supports them to complete their programme and to achieve high grades. Leaders provide mentors with comprehensive training in how best to support an apprentice's progress and well-being. Mentors communicate effectively with tutors; they know what

assignments apprentices are working on and how to link these to experiences at work.

Leaders and managers ensure that the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship are met. All apprentices have frequent access to high-quality off-the-job training during the working week, including shadowing unfamiliar work roles or attendance at sector conferences. Mentors keep up to date with the progress their apprentices make through quarterly review meetings with tutors and apprentices. This enables effective coordination of off- and on-the-job training, ensuring that apprentices can practise the knowledge and skills they learn in the workplace.

Leaders rightly recognise the need to provide apprentices with clearer advice and guidance about their future careers. The quality of guidance provided by staff is too variable, and a minority of apprentices have had little or none. While leaders have sensible plans to improve the quality of their advice and guidance, the impact of these actions cannot yet be felt by apprentices.

Since the monitoring visit, staff have made substantial improvements to the recruitment and induction of new apprentices. Staff assess what apprentices know and can do at the start of the course and use this information effectively to plan individualised training. For example, they use the outcomes of the initial assessment to choose appropriate units for apprentices based on the needs of their job role and their future ambitions. Staff also recommend specific technical and soft-skills webinars to support individual apprentices' needs.

Tutors use their expertise, experience and training to teach apprentices, including those with special educational needs, effectively. In one-to-one sessions and group webinars, tutors ask searching questions to test not only apprentices' knowledge, but also to test them on how to deal with difficult situations. For example, they discuss how to deal with uncertainty or conflict when considering case law. By discussing different approaches, apprentices reflect on and develop the professional behaviours they need in the workplace.

Tutors do not consistently give clear and constructive feedback on apprentices' written work. Too often, feedback is limited to praise and is not developmental. As a result, apprentices are aware of what they have done well, but not how to improve their work. Tutors do not routinely correct errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar in apprentices' written work. As a result, despite needing to frequently communicate with their customers in writing, apprentices do not improve the quality of their written English.

Tutors role model British values in their interactions with apprentices and discuss how these values relate to their roles. For example, apprentices learn about the vulnerabilities of people regarding the pandemic and the cost of living and understand the positions of responsibility they have within the communities they serve. Despite this, a few apprentices were unable to link these values to how they support customers.

Staff encourage apprentices to develop professionally through attending conferences and other events organised by the IRRV. Apprentices find these events to be valuable opportunities to extend their knowledge of the sector. However, staff do not provide opportunities for apprentices to develop their wider contributions to society.

Tutors prepare apprentices well for their end of course assessments. For example, tutors check apprentices' knowledge and skills through practise professional discussions and presentations to ensure they are ready for formal assessments. Almost all apprentices who complete their apprenticeship pass their qualification, and a high proportion gain distinction grades.

Apprentices who need qualifications in English or mathematics are taught these subjects effectively through subcontracted provision. Tutors carefully check apprentices' readiness to be assessed, and most apprentices gain the qualifications they need. All apprentices are taught and practise mathematics skills through the subjects they learn, such as business rates. However, tutors do not place equal importance on developing apprentices' literacy skills.

Governors use their industry and related experience well to provide effective scrutiny and support to senior leaders. They challenge leaders well to make improvements and carefully check their progress towards the actions they have set. Leaders inform governors accurately of the provider's strengths and weaknesses and ensure they understand the requirements of apprenticeship provision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding that also includes a high emphasis on well-being. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and two deputies are appropriately trained and experienced for their roles. They ensure that all staff follow the clear and appropriate procedures for making referrals when faced with a safeguarding concern. They respond rapidly to referrals, take swift, appropriate actions, and provide follow-up support for apprentices. The DSL reports to governors, who take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously.

Leaders rightly place a high emphasis on online safety due to the remote nature of the work of their apprentices. They ensure that all apprentices are taught in detail about potential dangers and how to stay safe online, including from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

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

- Leaders must ensure that tutors consistently provide apprentices with constructive feedback on their written work that clearly identifies what they can do to improve their work. This must include how to improve their written English as well as their vocational knowledge.
- Leaders must improve the quality of the careers advice and guidance that they provide. They must ensure that all apprentices have access to impartial information about the range of careers options available to them after their apprenticeship.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2556377
<b>Address</b>	167-169 Great Portland Street, 5th Floor London W1W 5PF
<b>Contact number</b>	020 7691 8994
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.irrv.net">www.irrv.net</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Gary Watson
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Runway Apprenticeships Ltd

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of educational services, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection 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

Lowenna Bradley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nick Crombie	His Majesty's Inspector
Agnes Joseph	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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