

University of Cambridge

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 of Cambridge started teaching apprenticeship qualifications in April 2019. The university offers level 7 senior leader, architect (integrated degree) and academic professional apprenticeships. Currently, apprentices studying senior leader apprenticeship work for various police forces in England. At the time of the new provider monitoring visit, there were 145 apprentices in training. Over half of the apprentices are studying level 7 senior leader apprenticeship.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Senior leaders have developed a highly ambitious curriculum to meet the needs of employers and the communities they serve. For example, they have developed a bespoke senior leader curriculum for the national police force. This ensures that apprentices become effective professionals. Apprentices are challenged to evaluate current policing practices to implement an inclusive culture of policing. The curriculum attracts apprentices who would not have traditionally studied on degree level courses.

Leaders and managers consult employers at all stages of curriculum planning, design and implementation. This enables apprentices to become invaluable to the organisations and the sectors they work in. Architect (integrated degree) apprentices receive additional learning opportunities, such as designing commercial buildings, beyond the work that their own organisations cover. Employers carefully plan these opportunities with university leaders at the beginning of the course. This enables apprentices to gain rich and relevant industry experience and prepare them to be highly sought-after professionals.

Senior leaders recruit lecturers who are leading experts in their subjects. They continue to practice within the sector. Lecturers who teach the senior leader

qualification consult frequently with both national and international police forces to remain appraised of sector developments to implement in their teaching. They subsequently influence national and international policing policies. Apprentices challenge current working practices. For example, they work on projects on how to better meet United Nations sustainability goals of reducing crime and creating safer communities.

Leaders and managers are forensic in their analysis of strengths and areas for development for the qualifications they teach. They make timely interventions to improve the quality of education. Apprentice and employer representatives frequently communicate with senior leaders through forums set up by the university. This allows leaders to receive valuable feedback to help them improve the course. For example, employers wanted to ensure that workplace mentors understood their roles clearly and provide high-quality support to their apprentices. Leaders have arranged specific training to support this. As a result, apprentices feel very well guided on their course and in the workplace

The governing body has accurate and effective oversight of the quality of the apprenticeship education. It provides robust challenge while supporting senior leaders to make continuous improvement.

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 rapidly develop significant industry relevant knowledge, skills and professional behaviours. For example, senior leader apprentices often take the difficult leadership decisions necessary to change the culture of policing to better meet the diverse communities they serve. The decisions apprentices make are helping to restore public confidence in the national police force. Senior leader apprentices are exposed to challenges, such as dealing with national and international terrorism incidents early on their course. This enables them to review and improve their strategic response. Employers value the training and education that their apprentices receive.

Lecturers use highly effective assessment strategies to enable apprentices to understand and prepare for their examinations. Apprentices use this information to develop their technical knowledge and improve their higher thinking and study skills. Lecturers consistently link feedback on the written assignments to the requirements of the final examinations. This helps apprentices to repeatedly practise and improve their examination technique to achieve high grades.

Apprentices benefit from high-quality on-and off-the-job training. Lecturers frequently arrange highly relevant activities that help apprentices extend their knowledge. For example, architect (integrated degree) apprentices attend seminars and work placements with professional sector bodies. Apprentices discuss and share

ideas about the latest architectural techniques with leading industry experts that challenge them to improve current architectural practices.

Apprentices with additional learning needs receive prompt and highly effective help. Lecturers complete appropriate training to accurately identify any extra learning requirements that apprentices may have. Apprentices receive help from specialists at the university and at their place of work to develop appropriate strategies. They have frequent check-ups to assess the effectiveness of these strategies. This extra help enables apprentices to swiftly progress through their qualifications.

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

Apprentices are safe and know who to report any concerns too.

Apprentices demonstrate a deep understanding of safeguarding and safety issues. They can apply this to their professional lives appropriately. Architect (integrated degree) apprentices, for example, take appropriate precautions when working in derelict buildings. They know how to work safely in areas where they may injure themselves by encountering used syringes and other discarded drug paraphernalia. Leaders frequently consult with senior police officer apprentices to update the university safeguarding practices.

Safeguarding staff take rapid and effective actions to deal with any welfare or well-being concerns. They often refer on to multiple agencies, including GP surgeries and specialist departments, to help apprentices who are at risk. This ensures that apprentices receive effective help, return to their studies and complete their qualification.

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