

London Design and Engineering University Technical College

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number:	2527508
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Inspection dates:	25 and 26 January 2023
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

London Design and Engineering University Technical College (LDE UTC) was inspected in February 2022. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

LDE UTC is an independent learning provider based in the London Borough of Newham. Ofsted inspected the full-time provision at the UTC for learners aged 14 to 19 in March 2022 under the school inspection framework. This report relates solely to the UTC's apprenticeship provision.

LDE UTC has offered engineering-related apprenticeships since 2017. At the time of the visit, there were 33 apprentices following apprenticeship standards. There were 20 apprentices on level 3 digital engineer and civil engineering technician standards. A further 13 apprentices were studying a degree apprenticeship at level 6 through a subcontracting arrangement with the University of East London (UEL). Of these, 11 were studying the civil engineer standard, and the remaining two were studying the geo-spatial mapping and science specialist standard.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices at the subcontractor benefit from a curriculum that develops their knowledge and skills beyond their academic learning? **Reasonable progress**

New managers and staff at LDE UTC and UEL have added welcomed capacity to the management and delivery of the level 6 programmes. Managers took timely action after the previous inspection to introduce a six-week personal development programme for level 6 apprentices. This included a broad range of topics such as gambling, modern slavery, British values and careers advice and guidance.

Leaders and managers recognise the need to develop the content of the personal development curriculum so that it better reflects apprentices' own circumstances. Most apprentices attended the six-week personal development programme. However, they could not recall in detail what they learned from the programme. Leaders plan to repeat the programme this year after consultation with apprentices.

Leaders and managers work effectively with employers and the professional body for civil engineers to ensure that apprentices receive careers advice and guidance on their next steps once they complete their training. Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices benefit from industry speakers and have access to careers advice via the university. As a result, apprentices are aware, for example, of what they need to do should they aspire to become a chartered civil engineer.

What progress have leaders, managers and staff made in preparing and supporting apprentices to achieve high grades during their programme and in their final assessments. **Reasonable progress**

Teachers use a variety of strategies to support apprentices to achieve high grades. For example, teachers provide apprentices with exemplar work so that apprentices can see the quality of work needed to achieve high grades. Tutors provide clear assignment briefs and precise written feedback to help apprentices improve their work and achieve high grades. Apprentices confidently explain the difference between the academic writing approaches they use so they can achieve well. For example, they can distinguish between explaining, discussing and evaluating in the written work. As a result, most digital engineer apprentices achieve distinction grades in their coursework units.

Teachers give apprentices helpful feedback on their written work. Subsequently, apprentices redraft and improve their work. For example, in their second drafts, apprentices improve how they format and reference their written work. As a result, apprentices produce work of a high standard.

Leaders and managers have implemented effective changes since the previous inspection to ensure that apprentices understand the requirements of their final assessments. For example, apprentices receive detailed information on the assessments from the Institute for Civil Engineers (ICE). Representatives from ICE, for example, explain how apprentices can structure their writing for their report and how to link this to the presentation they have to make. As a result, apprentices have a suitable understanding of what is expected of them.

Apprentices develop well the knowledge and skills they need for their final assessments. Level 3 apprentices remember securely what they are taught. Level 6 apprentices achieve well in their exams as they work towards the degree element of their apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices are confident as they approach the latter stages of their training.

What progress have leaders and managers made in improving the involvement of employers, particularly in progress reviews, to ensure that managers know about their apprentices' **Reasonable progress**

progress and give apprentices sufficient opportunities and time to apply their learning?

Managers ensure that employers have a sound understanding of the apprenticeship programme and their role and responsibilities towards apprentices. For example, managers work effectively with employers and degree apprentices so that they understand what constitutes training in the workplace. As a result, apprentices are accurately recording the training they carry out at work.

Managers played a pivotal role in supporting a small number of apprentices to remain in training when they changed employers during their training. This helped apprentices to settle quickly in their new jobs and get the support they need from their employer.

Managers schedule progress reviews so that employers and apprentices have good notice of when they need to attend. Employers consistently take part in reviews of the progress that apprentices make with staff from the LDT UTC. This ensures that employers understand what apprentices are learning and the progress they are making. This helps employers plan sufficient opportunities for apprentices to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours at work. Apprentices receive the time they need at work to complete their studies. Employers are supportive should apprentices need additional time to complete their work.

Managers have increased the level of support that level 6 apprentices receive. Apprentices say that they feel better supported since the previous inspection, both at work and by the college. Managers track the progress apprentices make more effectively, and apprentices know what they need to do to continue to make progress. Where apprentices are behind in their studies, they are provided with suitable support to catch up. As a result, level 6 apprentices are motivated to achieve.

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