

# University of Westminster

Monitoring visit report

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision funded 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 Westminster (UOW) is a large university based in the London boroughs of Westminster and Brent. UOW has its main campus on Regent Street in central London, with other campuses in Fitzrovia, Marylebone and Harrow. It teaches a wide range of higher education programmes, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, as well as degree apprenticeships. Only UOW's degree apprenticeships were in scope for this monitoring visit. UOW offers apprenticeship programmes at levels 4, 6 and 7 to 403 apprentices on standards-based programmes. Most apprentices are on either the level 6 chartered surveyor or level 6 healthcare science practitioner standards.

### 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 created an effective curriculum offer that meets the needs of employers and their local communities in areas with significant skills gaps. For example, they have developed a broad chartered surveyor curriculum that provides suitable training for different fields in the property and building construction sector. They also teach higher-level apprenticeships in areas such as healthcare, where there is a growing demand for qualified practitioners.

Leaders work successfully with employers to design and implement their curricula. They teach apprentices an ambitious curriculum based on emerging developments and industry changes. Apprentices achieve sector-based qualifications and gain professional status critical to their careers, such as registered chartered surveyor and biomedical scientist status. As a result, the curriculum prepares apprentices well for their workplace and the sector.

Leaders ensure that apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training time. Apprentices attend lectures, seminars and practical sessions at the university to learn the theory that underpins their jobs. These sessions help apprentices to make the progress expected of them.

Leaders have revised their initial advice and guidance processes to ensure that apprentices' roles match well with their apprenticeship standards. Staff carry out a suitable initial assessment to identify what apprentices already know and can do. They also interview apprentices to check if apprentices will find the content challenging enough. This ensures that apprentices have the opportunity to gain significant new knowledge and skills through their programme.

Leaders undertake suitable activities to check the quality of their apprenticeship provision. However, leaders do not routinely analyse key information on all elements of their apprenticeships. For example, they do not regularly discuss apprentices' attendance or progress in English and mathematics. Consequently, they do not have a consistently thorough oversight of apprentices' progress. Leaders have developed a clear action plan to improve their performance. However, most of the actions identified are not yet fully implemented across the provision.

Leaders provide helpful information to members of their governing board. The apprenticeship governance board uses this information to challenge leaders effectively in order to make improvements.

**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 and managers sequence the curriculum logically, so apprentices develop secure knowledge, skills and professional behaviours over time. Healthcare apprentices start by learning about human physiology and cell biology. Later in the programme, apprentices build on this knowledge to learn complex topics such as stem cell donation, patients' sample analysis and diagnosis.

Lecturers are highly knowledgeable and well-qualified in their subjects. They have relevant industry experience and are members of related professional bodies. They use this expertise to teach apprentices their course theory, enriched by current research and work practices. For example, level 6 chartered surveyor lecturers develop apprentices' knowledge of innovative technologies, such as drones and 3D technology, for surveying high-rise buildings.

Lecturers link theory well with real-world examples. This helps apprentices to successfully apply their learning to specific work-related projects. Apprentices produce a good standard of work that shows a secure understanding of the key concepts. They enjoy their training and the vast majority stay on their programme. Those who have completed their qualifications have passed and most have achieved distinction grades.

Skill coaches meet regularly with apprentices and their employer mentors to review apprentices' progress. Employers engage well in these reviews and provide helpful

insights into apprentices' performance and training at work. However, the quality of targets set in progress reviews varies considerably. In a few cases, targets are too generic, and do not focus on the specific gaps in knowledge and skills that apprentices need to fill.

Lecturers support apprentices well in developing their knowledge of English and mathematics. For example, lecturers teach chartered surveyor apprentices how to calculate areas of different zones of commercial properties to work out the value of rent. In healthcare, lecturers teach apprentices how to analyse statistical data when testing samples and prepare flow charts to represent their findings. Consequently, apprentices' confidence in using mathematics at work improves.

Lecturers do not provide consistently good-quality feedback to apprentices on their marked work. Consequently, apprentices are not always clear on how to improve or how to achieve high grades in their assessments.

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

Leaders actively promote safeguarding across their apprenticeship programmes. Leaders ensure that the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is suitably trained to undertake their role effectively. Staff responsible for safeguarding take effective actions to deal with any safety and well-being concerns. They make appropriate referrals to relevant agencies, including doctors' surgeries and the police, to help apprentices who are at risk. Apprentices have access to a range of student support services, including counselling and mental health services, to support their well-being.

Lecturers teach apprentices about safe working practices relevant to their job roles. For example, they teach chartered surveyor apprentices how to carry out appropriate checks and risk assessments when working on construction sites, and healthcare apprentices how to take suitable precautions to prevent cross-infection in laboratories.

Leaders provide appropriate training and information to their apprentices on safeguarding and the risks of radicalisation and extremism. However, staff do not routinely revisit these topics in sufficient detail. Consequently, too many apprentices cannot recall what they have been taught.

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