

The University of Buckingham

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.

The University of Buckingham is a higher education provider based in Buckingham, Buckinghamshire. The university has been training apprentices since December 2021. At the time of the monitoring visit, the university had fewer than five apprentices in training, who were all enrolled on the level 3 business administrator programme. All apprentices were aged over 18 years and employed by the university. No apprentices were in receipt of high needs funding.

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 secure understanding of local, regional and national skills needs. They use this knowledge sensibly to inform their strategy to grow the university's apprenticeship provision. They have implemented a curriculum that is tailored to meet the university's administration needs closely. Leaders are ambitious for apprentices, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), providing opportunities for them to acquire new knowledge and skills beyond those required by their apprenticeship. For example, business administrator apprentices attend lectures in the university business school on topics such as leadership, marketing and innovation, providing a rich insight into higher level business concepts. As a result, apprentices make rapid progress and develop new skills and knowledge, therefore becoming better at their job roles.

Leaders ensure that the provision meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship successfully. Staff check carefully that apprentices are studying at the appropriate level to develop substantial new knowledge and skills. Furthermore, leaders ensure that apprentices access sufficient, high-quality off-the-job training to learn the skills they need for their job role well. Tutors and managers review

apprentices' progress diligently and agree targets that support the development of their skills, knowledge and behaviours successfully. Consequently, apprentices benefit from a well-planned, high-quality apprenticeship.

Leaders have put in place suitable arrangements to assess apprentices' skills, knowledge and behaviours at the end of their apprenticeship. These arrangements are well understood by staff, apprentices and their managers.

Leaders have begun to use suitable processes, such as learner surveys and observations, to ensure they understand the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, it is too early to assess the full impact of this.

Leaders have put in place appropriate arrangements for oversight of the apprenticeship provision by existing university committees. Senior managers hold leaders to account effectively, thereby developing the quality of the provision well.

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

Staff organise apprentices' learning carefully, enabling them to learn progressively more complex skills and knowledge. For example, apprentices learn initially to evaluate their own performance, to give and receive feedback and to set targets to improve their own performance and that of wider administrative activities. They then apply these concepts well, taking greater ownership of their learning as they progress through their apprenticeship.

Well-qualified tutors use a range of appropriate teaching techniques skilfully to aid apprentices' learning. They carefully link current and previous learning, enabling apprentices to remember new concepts quickly and apply them in their job roles well. They support apprentices to develop their use of English and mathematics by embedding these subjects in training and work activities effectively. However, tutors do not provide apprentices with feedback on how to develop their use of English to write more complex business documents.

Staff plan apprentices' on- and off-the-job training very carefully. Managers know what apprentices have learned in training sessions and use this to plan work activities with precision and purpose. For example, managers arrange for apprentices to work in different teams to fulfil specific tasks that are closely aligned to their recent training and that would not be available in their usual role. Consequently, apprentices apply and reinforce their learning at work quickly, becoming more competent and confident employees.

Tutors thoroughly check apprentices' understanding of what they have learned and how effectively they apply this in their job role. They use this to identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge and adapt future teaching activities to address them

successfully. Tutors provide apprentices with helpful feedback that identifies what they do well and what they need to change to improve their future work. As a result, apprentices' work develops over time and is to the standard expected.

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

Leaders promote apprentices' safety and well-being effectively, creating a caring and supportive place to learn and work. Apprentices have a good rapport with their tutors and are confident in talking to them if they have a welfare concern. Suitably trained safeguarding staff are readily available throughout the university to provide specialist support and liaise with external agencies, if needed. As a result, apprentices feel safe and understand what to do if they have a concern.

Apprentices are introduced to safeguarding and the risks of radicalisation and extremism during their induction and then at regular intervals throughout their programme. However, apprentices' recollection of these topics is often limited, which hinders their ability to keep themselves and others safe.

Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are completed on staff before they begin working with apprentices.

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