

# Applied Business Academy Limited

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

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**Unique reference number:** 2626849

**Name of lead inspector:** Jon Bowman, His Majesty's Inspector

**Inspection dates:** 15 and 16 March 2023

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** 5 Limeharbour Court  
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Applied Business Academy Limited 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.

Since the previous inspection, new staff have been appointed to increase capacity at management level. A new level 3 content creator apprenticeship standard has been launched. At the time of the monitoring visit, the provider had fewer than five apprentices enrolled on the content creator apprenticeship.

### Themes

**What progress have leaders and managers made to quality assure the work of tutors more rigorously to help them to improve their teaching and assessment skills?**

**Insufficient progress**

Since the previous inspection, managers have put in place a new performance management framework, which they aim to use to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. Leaders and managers intend to use a range of information, such as from classroom visits, and feedback from apprentices and employers to determine what training and development tutors need. However, managers have not fully implemented the framework. As a result, there has been limited impact on the quality of education that apprentices receive.

Managers do not carry out frequent enough checks on the quality of teaching. Where they identify areas for improvement, they are too slow to put in place training to improve teaching.

Managers meet frequently to review the training. However, they focus on processes such as recording and claiming funding rather than the quality of apprentices' experiences. Managers have been slow to support staff to hold more productive reviews with apprentices that focus on the progress apprentices make.

**What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that tutors assess what learners know and can do at the start of their programme, so they can develop a personalised programme that effectively builds on learners' existing skills and knowledge.**

**Insufficient progress**

Leaders and managers have put in place processes to establish what apprentices know and can do at the start of their training. For example, apprentices complete a skills scan to use as a tool to assess their existing skills and plan learning based on their individual needs. However, staff do not use information from the skills scan to create and teach a personalised programme based on apprentices' existing knowledge, skills and behaviours. As a result, apprentices are taught the same subject content regardless of what they already know and can do.

In workshop sessions, tutors do not link subject content well enough to what apprentices do at work. In their workplaces, apprentices do not always have sufficient opportunities to put into practice what they learn in training sessions. For example, they do not have access to software tools they are taught about. They do not practise tasks such as using social media analytics or scheduling tools or create marketing personas to target audience segments. As a result, apprentices do not sufficiently consolidate and develop their skills and knowledge at work.

**What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that apprentices are provided with specific and helpful feedback on their work and in progress reviews, so they know exactly what they need to do to improve.**

**Insufficient progress**

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices get consistently high-quality feedback on their work. Tutors do not give feedback to apprentices to enable them to identify what they need to do to improve or what gaps in knowledge they have. Skills coaches give apprentices useful information about broad areas of training they can do, for example, in software accreditation. However, they do not provide good enough guidance on specific areas of knowledge that apprentices need to improve on well.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices receive structured enough feedback on the work they complete in their job roles. Leaders have not worked with employers to help them align and assess work activities with their apprentices. For example, leaders have not set expectations on employers to provide helpful industry-based feedback on what apprentices do, so they can improve in their job roles.

**What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that staff provide high-quality and impartial careers advice and guidance to apprentice, so they know about the range of opportunities available to them at the end of their course.**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have developed a personal development module for apprentices. This includes a session on career planning, which is introduced at the start of the programme. Current apprentices have had an initial careers meeting, where they discuss their short- and long-term career goals.

Apprentices have useful discussions with their industry experienced tutor. While not all apprentices inspectors spoke with were clear on their career options following completion of their programme, leaders and managers have taken positive steps to ensure that careers guidance is integrated into the programme. Apprentices are able to explain, for example, the higher-level courses they could take on achieving their current programme. They know the job roles that they would be suited to as a result of their training.

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