

edX Boot Camps (UK) Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Montserrat Pérez-Parent, His Majesty's Inspector
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Address:	8 Devonshire Square London EC2M 4PL

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision where the provision offered is in scope for inspection. 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.

edX Boot Camps (UK) Limited (edX) is an independent learning provider based in the City of London. edX is a subsidiary of 2U, an American education technologies company, and offers Skills Bootcamps funded by the Department for Education. Since October 2022, just over 2,000 adult learners have joined courses in front-end web developing in seven different groups.

At the time of the visit, a group of just under 300 learners were studying in three separate classes. Group lessons and one-to-one support are entirely online.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose? Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have experience of teaching bootcamps online in America. They drew on this knowledge and expertise to plan Skills Bootcamp courses in front-end web development in England, to fill skills gaps in the digital sector. Leaders underestimated the challenges that this would pose, particularly in teaching courses over fewer weeks than those to which they were accustomed.

Leaders were too slow to take action to tackle the poor outcomes for learners on their courses. To date, the proportion of learners who pass their courses is low. At the time of the visit, too many learners had dropped out or were making slow progress on the course.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of the progress that learners make. They do not use the data relating to learners' performance and progress that they collect on a weekly basis effectively. They do not analyse data about when learners withdraw from the course to identify any patterns. They do not scrutinise delays in the submission of work to identify learners who may be falling behind with their studies, so that they can support them and prevent them from leaving before the end of the course.

Very few of the learners who pass their courses attend the job interviews set up for them. Leaders and managers attribute this to learners not taking up the self-guided careers support available to them. They now offer a structured, staff-led careers programme. Careers staff teach a weekly session in which they cover a range of useful topics. This has resulted in an increase in the number of learners who submit their CVs for review and book one-to-one careers coaching support sessions. Leaders have arranged virtual internships to introduce current learners to real working environments and prepare them better for interviews.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? Reasonable progress

Instructors and teaching assistants use high-quality resources, which the curriculum development team updates very frequently, to teach learners current industry knowledge and up-to-date coding skills. Learners who pass the Skills Bootcamp courses learn sought-after coding languages that greatly enhance their chances of gaining employment in the digital industry.

Instructors and teaching assistants teach learners how to create the structure of a webpage and to add formatting and style to it. Through their clear guidance, learners learn how to make websites more interactive by adding elements such as buttons. Learners who reach the end of the course create their own webpages using multiple libraries and incorporating local storage.

In lessons, instructors and teaching assistants guide and support learners well to recall what they have learned and use it to solve coding errors on their own. They use online breakout rooms effectively to offer a choice of working environments to suit learners. For example, learners can work independently, with a group, or receive support from a teaching assistant. On a few occasions, when working in groups without staff support, learners struggle to complete their tasks.

Instructors do not assess learners' prior knowledge and skills thoroughly at the start of their courses. They teach all groups of learners the same content, dedicating the same amount of time to each topic for all learners. Learners who have no prior knowledge of coding find the course content challenging once this becomes more complex. Many learners struggle with their final project as they have not secured the skills and knowledge they need to meet its technical requirements.

Instructors give learners precise and useful feedback on how to improve their work further. Learners act on this feedback and the standard of their work improves over time.

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

Leaders and managers were too slow to realise their statutory responsibility to comply with the 'Prevent' duty. Learners do not have an understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, how these might affect their lives and current or future job roles, or how to keep themselves safe from them. Leaders have not identified the risks local to the areas where their learners live and work.

Instructors, teaching assistants and a senior leader have recently completed relevant training on safeguarding adults. Learners adhere to leaders' high expectations of behaviour on courses and know who to report any unacceptable behaviour to.

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