

Uniper Technologies Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Address: Technology centre
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after 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 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Uniper Technologies Limited (Uniper) was established in 2016 and is a privately owned independent learning provider. It began delivering vocational training by means of levy-funded apprenticeships in September 2017. This provision was in scope for the monitoring visit.

Uniper Technologies Limited has 40 standards-based and 30 framework-based apprentices. They are working towards either a maintenance and operations or non-destructive testing engineering advanced apprenticeship. Apprentices are employed at sites across England.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Significant progress

Senior leaders have set and communicated a very clear strategic ambition to be a leading provider of high-quality apprenticeship training to the energy industry. They work very closely with employers to identify and address the skills shortage needs for technicians in the renewable and non-renewable energy sectors. Leaders and managers actively engage with national bodies to support the development of training that solves these shortfalls. For example, through significant collaborative working, managers have developed and piloted potential apprenticeship testing arrangements. Consequently, apprentices are very effectively prepared for the end-point test as its format emerges.

Leaders and managers take significant care to contract with employers who are fully committed to delivering the relevant high-quality training that apprentices need. For example, all apprentices routinely receive far more than the minimum off-the-job training within working hours required of their programmes. This, and the well-planned and coordinated link with on-the-job training, ensures that all apprentices develop quickly vocationally relevant skills, knowledge and behaviours.

Leaders and managers have an excellent understanding of apprenticeship programmes. They are scrupulous in regularly reviewing apprentices' training to check that it is fulfilling all necessary requirements. For example, managers methodically apply funding adjustments to account for apprentices' exemptions from parts of the programme due to prior learning accreditation.

All apprentices receive very useful information, advice and guidance prior to starting, and during, their programme. Trainers and apprentices regularly explore career pathways and progression opportunities during progress reviews. The training centre has developed a helpful and informative website that apprentices access. It offers information about a range of health, welfare and well-being resources and services. Apprentices supplement this by using Derby College's careers resources and support services. Nearly all apprentices have remained on programme. The very few apprentices who leave before their planned date do so for personal reasons beyond Uniper's control. Managers support apprentices appropriately where needed.

Apprentices voluntarily commence their apprenticeship training and have a sound appreciation of how it will contribute to achieving their personal goals. The very large majority of apprentices are relatively new to their job role. They can articulate well how their training is making them more effective employees. Managers and employers encourage all apprentices to gain professional body registration and membership towards the end of their programme.

All off-the-job training takes place in high-quality learning facilities. The equipment and resources apprentices use for practical tasks replicate exactly those found in the energy industry. This ensures that apprentices take part in training that realistically reflects the challenges they could meet in the workplace. Consequently, apprentices rapidly learn to apply effectively their newly acquired skills, knowledge and behaviours to a wide range of employment scenarios.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Significant progress

All apprentices receive a thorough assessment of their prior attainment, knowledge and what they can do before starting their programme. This includes identification of any additional learning needs they may have. Tutors make very good use of this information to plan apprentices' on- and off-the-job training and any associated learning support arrangements.

Trainers have a sound knowledge of their apprentices and are ambitious for their success. All trainers are very experienced and qualified in their vocational areas. They undertake a good variety of relevant professional development activities. This ensures that trainers have current vocational knowledge and the skills to support

apprentices' development. Trainers are accessible to apprentices at their workplace and the training centre. They quickly respond to any concerns that apprentices raise and ensure that they progress swiftly towards achieving their learning goals.

Apprentices are effusive about the high quality of teaching and support they receive during on- and off-the-job training. They are well-motivated and curious to learn and achieve. Apprentices recognise the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they have gained and how they have contributed to their improved effectiveness in the workplace.

Managers have provided excellent off-the-job training and learning resources that trainers use to deliver creative and interesting taught sessions. Off-the-job training is of a consistently high standard. Trainers plan demanding tasks that require apprentices to develop their personal confidence and competence. For example, they set apprentices complex time bound technical tasks. Apprentices quickly learn to use effective critical analysis and teamwork to solve problems.

Trainers provide apprentices with particularly close monitoring and regular reviews of their progress. Employers engage fully in the review process with their apprentices. Trainers very effectively challenge apprentices to respond confidently to questions and to demonstrate their newly acquired vocational and personal competence. Apprentices recognise that this effectively prepares them for the end-point assessment and job interviews.

All apprentices make good or better progress from their starting points. Apprentices know and can articulate the progress that they are making. They know what they need to do to improve and how they will achieve their learning targets. Trainers make good use of progress tracking processes to promote apprentices' achievement.

The quality of support for the few apprentices who need to achieve functional skills accreditation in English and/or mathematics is good. All gain their qualification at the first attempt. Trainers skilfully raise apprentices' English and mathematics skills during taught sessions and in workshops. All apprentices are developing proficiency in utilising the correct technical terminology for their vocational areas. Apprentices enhance their computer-related digital skills to an appropriately competent level.

Trainers give good attention to engaging with employers so that on- and off-the-job training is planned and delivered as a coherent programme. Uniper staff visit apprentices' workplaces and effectively monitor the quality of training. In addition, they review and reinforce apprentices' application of their new knowledge, skills and behaviours within their work roles. Employer representatives attend the training centre to check that the quality of the training meets their business needs.

Quality improvement and assurance arrangements are highly effective in raising the standards of teaching, learning and assessment. Senior leaders and managers have a very detailed understanding of the apprenticeship programmes' strengths and areas for improvement. Managers' rigorous monitoring and review of the action plan for quality improvement lead to rapid enhancements to the provision. In addition,

managers and trainers use the frequent feedback from apprentices and employers particularly well to improve the quality of training. Managers closely monitor the performance of the subcontracted training delivered by Derby College. The college and Uniper staff work very effectively together to plan training that is of a high and improving quality.

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

Leaders and managers give a very high priority to protecting all apprentices from harm. The management of safeguarding is particularly good. Managers ensure that safeguarding arrangements are subject to continual improvement. Accommodation used by apprentices when studying away from home is subject to strict safety vetting. Staff at these venues are suitably trained to protect the young people and adults in their care. Apprentices' understanding and application of relevant health and safety practices are excellent. This ensures that they consistently demonstrate the demanding performance standards expected by employers in the energy sector.

Managers effectively review policies and procedures to improve their usefulness in defending apprentices from harm. The stakeholder board provides good oversight of managers' actions. It successfully challenges them to improve safeguarding arrangements to benefit apprentices. All trainers are subject to relevant safe recruitment practices prior to beginning their duties with apprentices.

Leaders, managers and trainers are very adept at identifying potential safeguarding issues. They methodically record and rapidly address their concerns. The designated safeguarding officers collaborate well with external organisations to refer apprentices for specialist help where necessary. Managers have put in place comprehensive processes that offer apprentices a good level of support for mental well-being.

Senior leaders ensure that all trainers receive pertinent training. Managers appropriately make trainers aware of local safeguarding intelligence to alert them to potential risks to apprentices and themselves. All trainers use their learning productively to discuss a wide range of personal safety topics with apprentices during training sessions and progress reviews.

Apprentices report feeling very safe during their training and are confident in raising concerns when they arise. They have a very good understanding of the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and social media. Leaders and managers suitably monitor training centre computer security to prevent inappropriate use.

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