

BPP University Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

20–23 May 2019

Overall effectiveness		Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Apprenticeships Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	
Outcomes for learners	Good	
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Since the previous new provider monitoring visit, governors, leaders and managers have made rapid improvements to the management and quality of apprenticeship programmes, which are good.
- Leaders and managers design a highly appropriate curriculum. Apprenticeship programmes meet the specialist needs of their employers.
- The majority of apprentices studying business, finance, insurance operations and compliance achieve their qualifications in the planned time.
- Tutors and coaches give apprentices very good support to prepare them for their end-point assessment. Almost all apprentices pass on their first attempt. A high proportion achieve distinction grades.
- Apprentices learn through very effective one-to-one coaching sessions. Coaches are well qualified and experienced, and support apprentices very well.
- Apprentices gain substantial new knowledge and skills, and develop in confidence as a result of their learning. They have high aspirations to progress to higher levels of study.
- A very high proportion of apprentices who take English functional skills qualifications achieve them at their first attempt.
- Apprentices benefit from a good range of extra activities outside their programme. They attend a variety of skills days and workshops that support them to develop their teamworking skills and awareness of new technology.
- Most apprentices remain in employment, gain additional responsibilities or progress to the next level of study on completion of their programmes.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their mathematics functional skills qualifications at their first attempt is too low.
- Managers and staff do not check and record in sufficient detail when apprentices attend their off-the-job training. They do not have an accurate view of how often apprentices engage in learning.
- Tutors do not use the information they have about apprentices' prior skills well enough to ensure that the online webinars challenge the more experienced apprentices.

Full report

Information about the provider

- BPP University Ltd (BPP), based in the city of London, forms part of a group of BPP companies involved in a broad cross-section of education and training activities in the UK and abroad. BPP teaches a range of programmes, including apprenticeships, degrees and postgraduate study. The main subject areas are law, business, technology, banking and health.
- The provision in scope for this inspection was apprentices on programmes from levels 2 to 5 in a range of professional vocational areas, including legal, paralegal, insurance, financial services, business and banking. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,000 apprentices on apprenticeship standards and frameworks. The vast majority of these are over the age of 18 years. BPP works with two subcontractors to support a very small cohort of apprentices on level 3 compliance programmes.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that tutors facilitate online webinars that challenge the most able and experienced apprentices by:
 - collecting and reviewing apprentices' feedback on these sessions
 - supporting tutors to use the information they have about apprentices' prior knowledge and skills when preparing sessions
 - implementing additional sessions to meet the differing needs of apprentices.
- Leaders and managers should implement a reliable system to track apprentices' attendance at their off-the-job training sessions and inform employers promptly when apprentices do not attend.
- Managers and staff should improve the proportion of apprentices who achieve their mathematics functional skills qualifications at their first attempt.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Governors, leaders and managers have rectified the majority of weaknesses identified at the previous new provider monitoring visit. For example, they have rapidly introduced a new and effective system to monitor the progress that apprentices make so that a high proportion are on track to achieve. They have supported tutors and coaches to ensure that apprentices receive helpful feedback about their work.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the apprenticeship programme. They implement highly effective quality assurance processes that have a positive impact on teaching and learning. For example, the newly introduced programme approval process focuses managers, coaches and tutors on improving the new skills that apprentices develop. Managers make accurate evaluations in their observations of teaching and learning.
- Leaders and managers have implemented a curriculum that is responsive to employers' and apprentices' training needs. Managers involve employers closely in planning programmes that help apprentices become more productive. Managers work particularly well with the end-point assessment organisation, and this results in a high proportion of apprentices passing first time and gaining distinctions.
- Managers monitor thoroughly the quality of subcontracted provision. They make sensible decisions about how they enable subcontractors to support apprentices to gain the specific qualifications needed by the employers with whom they work.
- Leaders and managers focus on improving coaches' and tutors' teaching and training practices. Coaches and tutors have access to an extensive range of resources to improve their teaching techniques. As a result, apprentices enjoy their training sessions and make good progress.
- Leaders and managers promote the ethos of respecting differences and treating individuals fairly. They equip coaches and tutors with the knowledge to ensure that apprentices understand British values. Managers have also put in place a good range of support for apprentices, such as a counselling service.
- The vast majority of apprentices have good English and mathematics skills. For those who need to gain qualifications in these subjects, managers have appropriate support in place. However, they are right to identify that more apprentices need to achieve mathematics qualifications. They have clear plans in place, such as training for tutors and coaches to give extra support to apprentices outside of mathematics sessions.
- Leaders and managers do not collect enough feedback from apprentices on the quality of webinars. As a result, they do not identify that a minority of more experienced apprentices do not value these sessions or find them challenging enough.

The governance of the provider

- Governors have supported very effectively the transformation of the provision following the monitoring visit. They have a clear and accurate oversight of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship programmes. They receive frequent and accurate

reports on the quality of the programmes and on apprentices' progress. Governors have an appropriate understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

- Governors use their expertise to challenge managers to improve quickly the quality of apprenticeship programmes. They are fully involved in the review of the provision and how tutors and coaches teach it. For example, they influenced the revised teaching strategy to make better use of coaches when training apprentices.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and managers place a clear emphasis on keeping apprentices safe, including when they work online. All staff have appropriate qualifications and understand their responsibilities, including the 'Prevent' duty. A senior leader, responsible for keeping apprentices safe, monitors frequently the implementation of the safeguarding policies and the detailed 'Prevent' duty action plan. All four designated safeguarding leads have connections with different local safeguarding boards.
- Managers have extended recently their safeguarding policies and procedures to include risks associated with honour-based violence and female genital mutilation. They follow strict safer-recruitment practices to ensure that staff are suitable to work with apprentices. Managers take swift and effective action when apprentices are at risk. For example, they ensure that apprentices have access to specialist support and protection whenever necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Apprentices benefit from well-planned, well-structured and well-taught programmes that meet their needs and the needs of their employers. Managers and staff ensure that they meet the principles of the apprenticeship programme.
- Tutors, coaches and assessors have very high expectations for their apprentices. They have expert knowledge and experience in the subjects they teach and support. They know their apprentices very well and apprentices make good progress.
- Most apprentices enjoy and engage actively in their learning. They use the variety of good learning resources available to them, on the virtual learning environment and online webinars, to prepare for their sessions and recap on their learning. For example, leadership and management apprentices use a diverse range of digital resources to help them prepare for their personal and professional development module.
- Coaches give apprentices very good support during the one-to-one coaching and mentoring sessions. They use precise questioning to encourage apprentices to link what they learn in their off-the-job training to their job activities. As a result, apprentices understand how to apply the theory they learn to their job roles.
- Tutors and coaches support those apprentices who have additional learning needs and/or social and emotional needs very effectively. They use the information they have about apprentices to plan the most appropriate support for them. These apprentices benefit from extra one-to-one sessions and make good progress.

- Apprentices receive detailed, frequent and helpful feedback on their written assignments and projects. Tutors and assessors use clear assessment criteria that ensure that apprentices understand how to achieve high grades in their end-point assessments. Apprentices are well prepared for their end-point assessment, and they approach examinations, interviews and presentations confidently.
- Employers give apprentices good support in their workplaces and commit to releasing apprentices for their off-the-job training. Employers value the apprenticeship programmes. They are right to recognise how their apprentices have improved their knowledge, skills and behaviours and their impact on their employers' businesses. For example, many employers give apprentices additional activities and use apprentices to help and support new recruits.
- Most apprentices have an appropriate understanding of equality and diversity and the way that it affects their day-to-day work. Coaches discuss with apprentices the importance of British values during coaching sessions. Apprentices, particularly those on law and finance programmes, have an adequate appreciation of the rule of law, democracy and freedom of speech.
- The majority of apprentices produce written work to a high standard, which is often higher than the level they study. However, in a minority of apprentices' work, at levels 2 and 3, tutors and coaches do not support apprentices to improve their written English skills sufficiently.
- Tutors do not adapt their teaching styles during the online webinars to ensure that they challenge the more experienced apprentices. They do not use the information they have about apprentices' prior skills well enough. As a result, a minority of apprentices do not enjoy these sessions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices have high aspirations to succeed in the sectors in which they work. The majority of apprentices plan to move on to higher levels of study. For example, a high proportion of apprentices on paralegal level 3 programmes have mapped out their journey to a law programme at level 7.
- Tutors and coaches support apprentices to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, paralegal apprentices review contracts relating to property transactions, undertake company secretary functions and produce licence-to-occupy documentation. In compliance, apprentices confidently analyse crime data and report their findings.
- Apprentices access a good range of extra activities outside their programmes. For example, in law, apprentices attend 'smart tech' events that increase their awareness of new technology. A high proportion of apprentices attend skills days that improve their team-leading and communication skills.
- Apprentices use a wide range of technical language confidently in their discussions and their written work. For example, in human resources programmes, apprentices write succinctly about organisational models that support human resource theory.
- Apprentices receive thorough information, advice and guidance at the start of their programme, and have a good understanding of the opportunities available to them. As a result, apprentices join the most appropriate programme and level. Managers recruit

apprentices with integrity, and most apprentices are new to the sector in which they work.

- Apprentices use their mathematics skills very effectively in their workplaces and job roles. For example, level 3 paralegal apprentices work out the interest on payment arrears and court fees accurately. This avoids complex problems, should a minor discrepancy occur in the figures.
- Apprentices use the well-resourced virtual learning platform to find information on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to raise their awareness of equality and diversity. For example, apprentices access information about mental health in stressful work environments and know how to access the BPP counsellor.
- Apprentices feel safe and know to whom they should speak should they have any concerns. Coaches facilitate helpful discussions, in one-to-one sessions, to support apprentices to develop their understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices have an adequate understanding of these issues.
- Managers and staff do not check and record in sufficient detail when apprentices attend their off-the-job training sessions. Apprentices engage well in the many activities, such as webinars, coaching sessions and skills development days. However, managers and staff do not inform employers when apprentices do not attend. They do not have an accurate view of how often apprentices engage in sessions.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- A high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications in business, financing, investment operations and compliance, and do so within the planned time.
- Almost all apprentices on apprenticeship standards pass their end-point assessments at the first attempt. A high proportion of apprentices achieve distinctions.
- Managers have effective systems in place to check what apprentices do after they complete their programmes. Most apprentices remain in employment, gain additional responsibilities or progress to the next level of study.
- Managers have implemented an accurate system to track the progress that apprentices make. They use this system well to identify apprentices who do not hand work in on time and to plan extra one-to-one coaching sessions when apprentices fall behind. The majority of apprentices make good progress.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their English functional skills qualifications on their first attempt is very high. However, in mathematics, although the proportion has increased, it is still too low.
- Managers track the achievement of different groups of apprentices appropriately. Managers have identified that apprentices over the age of 25 on team-leading programmes do not achieve as well as others. Because of their evaluation, managers have decided not to offer this programme in the future.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1270751
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,528
Principal/CEO	Professor Tim Stewart
Telephone number	03300 603 500
Website	www.bppuniversity.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	80	115	142	421	12	230		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	International Compliance Training Ltd Just It Training Ltd							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the dean of academic quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous new provider monitoring visit report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed and listened to learning sessions and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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