

# University of Bedfordshire

Monitoring visit report

---

<b>Unique reference number:</b>	133841
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Sambit Sen, Her Majesty's Inspector
<b>Inspection dates:</b>	21–22 August 2019
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Higher education institution
<b>Address:</b>	Park Square Luton Bedfordshire LU1 3JU

## 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 ESFA 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.

University of Bedfordshire (UoB) is a higher education institution which has its main campuses in Luton. It started providing directly funded higher apprenticeships in September 2017. Currently there are 130 apprentices, most of whom are on standards-based apprenticeships. These are delivered within three main faculties, which include business school, creative arts technology and science, and health and social science. UoB delivers a range of higher apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5, including associate project manager, nursing associate, healthcare assistant practitioner and data analyst.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers carefully plan higher apprenticeship provision to meet the needs of local and regional skills shortages. They work closely with employers at a strategic level to design training programmes that meet business needs. As a result, UoB has repeat business from its employer base, both locally and regionally.

Apprentices who register on the higher apprenticeship programmes undertake a thorough and rigorous application process. This ensures that they are recruited on the right programme and the right level at the start of the programme.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. This helps most apprentices to make effective progress toward their academic qualifications and improve their work-related skills.

Senior managers recruit highly skilled lecturers to deliver apprenticeship courses. As a result, apprentices receive good-quality training and make good progress on their apprenticeship programme.

Managers have good oversight of apprentices' progress. For example, apprenticeship coordinators and managers regularly discuss those apprentices who make slow progress.

They put appropriate measures in place to support such apprentices. As a result, the majority of the apprentices are on track for timely completion of their course. However, a few apprentices are not supported to complete their programme in the planned time, as their line managers are not given sufficient information to help them.

Good external governance structure supports and challenges the apprenticeship provision at UoB. For example, managers use external representation and scrutiny at apprenticeship course approval. Assessments are moderated and reported by external examiners to the university. This ensures that apprentices benefit from good-quality training provision.

**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**

The majority of apprentices broaden their skills and knowledge as a result of the off-the-job training they receive. They develop good knowledge and academic skills, and many are able to bring new approaches to their work. For example, associate project manager apprentices apply their learning from the finance module to develop business cases within their organisations.

Lessons taught at UoB are well attended and are delivered by experienced specialists. As a result, the majority of the apprentices are on course to complete their apprenticeship programme in a timely manner.

Apprentices receive detailed and developmental feedback from their lecturers that supports them to improve their work and meet assessment criteria for the qualifications.

Apprentices are supported well to develop their academic writing skills through study skills and referencing sessions at UoB. The university delivers English and mathematics qualifications, through one of its subcontractors, to those who need it.

Apprentices' prior learning and experience are not always taken into account to personalise their learning. As a result, some of the more able apprentices are not fully stretched and challenged on the course.

A large majority of apprentices have a very limited understanding of end-point assessment (EPA). Some apprentices are unaware that they will be taking EPA or that they have the opportunity to achieve higher grades. Lecturers have started to prepare a few of the apprentices for the EPA. However, this has happened late in the programme and there has been minimal focus on developing skills and confidence to sit the exam.

Apprentices have limited understanding of the importance and relevance of British values. Managers and lecturers miss naturally occurring opportunities to discuss these concepts. For example, the business ethics module does not overtly refer to aspects of respect, tolerance and individual liberty.

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

**Reasonable progress**

Lecturers and trainers promote and implement safe working practices through their courses. In addition, most employers actively promote the well-being and welfare of employees. As a result, apprentices feel, and are, safe.

Leaders and managers implement safe recruitment practices. For example, they ensure that staff recruited to the university have the right checks carried out. A designated safeguarding lead has overall responsibility for the apprentices.

Apprentices receive safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty training at the start of the course and from their respective employers. However, although apprentices know whom to contact within their organisation if they have concerns, they are unsure whom to contact at the university.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Learner View**

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to [www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Employer View**

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to [www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019