



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a follow-up inspection of the

ApprenticeshipsNI provision

in

Global Horizon Skills Limited

December 2015

FOLLOW-UP TO THE APPRENTICESHIPSNI INSPECTION IN GLOBAL HORIZON SKILLS LIMITED

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection¹ of Global Horizon Skills Limited in October 2014 when the quality of the overall effectiveness of education and training was evaluated as satisfactory².

The main areas for improvement were the need to:

- further develop and strengthen the self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements, particularly the setting of key performance targets and reviewing of outcomes;
- strengthen the curriculum planning process, including effective engagement with employers and the use of information and learning technology (ILT) to better support the apprentices' learning and progression;
- increase recruitment to the apprenticeship programmes, across the full range of contracted professional and technical areas; and
- improve the overall retention rates on the customer service and financial services programmes.

The organisation's improvement plan submitted in response to the inspection lacked sufficient detail and was subsequently adjusted appropriately in the light of feedback given by the ETI.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit during 2015, with a follow-up inspection in December 2015.

In the interval since the original inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- a management information system has been developed to track and monitor the progress and achievements of the learners;
- a range of strategies have been introduced to improve communication with employers and the apprentices, and in particular, an employer engagement governance model has been cascaded across the organisation;
- five new financial services tutors and a customer service tutor have been recruited to support the development of the provision;
- a business development officer and a sales and marketing officer have been appointed with responsibility for developing contacts with clients, recruitment and marketing;
- the structure of the organisation has been revised, with a team assigned to each professional and technical area;

¹ <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-work-based-learning/inspection-reports-work-based-learning-2014/apprenticeshipsni-provision-in-global-horizon-skills-ltd.pdf>

² From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of an organisation previously evaluated as 'satisfactory', will now be evaluated as 'important areas for improvement'.

- an electronic assessment portfolio has been implemented and an web-based portal has been developed to enable the apprentices to access a good range of online resources to support them in their independent learning and progression; and
- appropriate action has been taken to improve the quality of the customer service, essential skills, and financial services provision.

Key findings

- The high strategic importance afforded by the organisation to addressing the areas for improvement identified in the inspection.
- The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning have been strengthened; however, there is a need to develop further the processes across all of the professional and technical areas, including the use of appropriate key performance targets.
- An appropriate management information system has been implemented to track and monitor the overall progress of the apprentices across the full programme, and to more effectively target intervention strategies for those apprentices who are at risk of prematurely leaving their apprenticeship.
- More holistic approaches to curriculum planning have been implemented and collegial working arrangements have improved across the provision.
- There is increased strategic engagement with employers, particularly with those in the key priority skills areas.
- A more diverse range of employers is now participating in the financial services apprenticeship programme, and there is improved recruitment across a wider range of the contracted professional and technical areas.
- The quality of the customer service, essential skills, and financial services provision has improved, and is now good.
- The overall retention rate has increased, however, there is a need to continue to improve the retention rates, particularly on the level 2 customer service and financial services programmes.

Overall Effectiveness

In the areas inspected, Global Horizon Skills Limited demonstrates that it now has the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of learners. The ETI will monitor the organisation's progress in addressing any areas for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE IN GLOBAL HORIZON SKILLS LIMITED

At the original inspection of Global Horizon Skills Limited in October 2014, the quality of the education and training in customer service was evaluated as satisfactory.

The key areas for improvement were:

- the curricular planning, particularly at operational level, to ensure the provision is cohesive and delivered in a timely manner;
- the assessment arrangements to ensure the apprentices are provided with constructive feedback on how to improve the quality and range of their written work; and
- the development of strategies to ensure high retention rates are achieved and maintained.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in June 2015.

In the interval since the original inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- the increased engagement with the apprentices' employers to plan for more regular and frequent directed training sessions, including the provision of appropriate curriculum enhancements, such as master classes on managing sales targets;
- the establishment of a web-based portal as a repository of online learning support materials which can be accessed at any time by the apprentices;
- the systematic collation of the reasons for which apprentices prematurely fail to complete their training, in order to inform suitable strategies to increase retention rates;
- the revision of the apprentices' personal training plans to include a matrix to track the ongoing development of their occupational and transferable skills; and
- the recruitment of an additional tutor to support the increased number of apprentices.

Key findings

- There is now suitable planning of the apprentices' directed training to ensure that they make appropriate progress in their learning, which accommodates well the apprentices' various work patterns.
- A well-considered induction programme has been developed to inform the apprentices of the content and nature of the training framework and the time commitment required by them.
- There is an expanded range of good quality learning support material, including online resources, to support and enhance effectively the apprentices' learning experiences and assessment arrangements.

- While there is evidence of improving quality in the standard of the apprentices' written work, there remains a need to reinforce the expectation of consistent high-quality work through more comprehensive marking for improvement.
- The strategies developed to improve the retention rates are well-considered, based on robust evidence, and leading to a steady improvement in the overall retention rate which is now good at 73% for 2014/15.

Overall outcome

In customer services, the quality of the education and training provided by Global Horizon Skills Limited is now good.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROVISION IN GLOBAL HORIZON SKILLS

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Global Horizon Skills in October 2014 when the quality of the education and training was evaluated as satisfactory.

The main areas for improvement were the need to:

- improve the quality of the leadership and management of the essential skills provision to ensure that the delivery of the provision is timely and systematic and supports the work of the apprentices in their professional and technical programmes;
- improve the monitoring of the attendance and commitment of the apprentices, and their employers, to the completion of the essential skills;
- develop the apprentices' capacity to produce good quality written communications across their essential skills and across their professional and technical work; and
- develop the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes and the inclusion within these processes of appropriate data capture and data analysis to monitor and evaluate the provision robustly.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in June 2015.

In the interval since the original inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- a schedule of meetings between the employer representatives and the essential skills tutors has been put in place to monitor the embedding of the essential skills provision;
- a regular monitoring and reporting schedule has been put in place to strengthen the collaboration between the essential skills tutors and the professional and technical tutors to support the more effective contextualisation and delivery of the essential skills;
- the use of the management information system has been strengthened to improve the data capture processes for the essential skills provision;
- all of the apprentices are being supported to undertake the essential skills qualifications at level 2 in literacy and numeracy;
- the employers have been offered the opportunity to avail of additional support in literacy for those apprentices who already hold a GCSE, or equivalent level 2 qualification, in English or communication; and
- planning is in place to provide additional support in ICT for those apprentices who require it.

Key Findings

- The improved leadership and management of the essential skills provision which includes the systematic monitoring of the provision, and the regular contact with employers, which has resulted in more effectively timetabled training slots and improved attendance.
- The pace of the completion and achievement of the essential skills has improved significantly, and all of the apprentices are achieving at level 2.
- The continued support offered to a minority of the apprentices beyond the achievement of a level 2 qualification, and in response to employer demand, which is an example of effective practice.
- The stronger communication between the essential skills tutors and the professional and technical tutors which has resulted in improved contextualisation of the apprentices' learning.
- The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are improving. While it is informed more effectively by more appropriate data capture and analysis, there remains a need to develop the quality improvement planning process further to set targets for completion for each of the essential skills.
- There is a continued need to support the development of the apprentices' information and communication technology skills to ensure that they can avail fully of the support and resources provided for independent study and for blended learning opportunities.

Overall outcome

In the essential skills, the quality of education and training provided by Global Horizon Skills is now good.

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF FINANCIAL SERVICES IN GLOBAL HORIZON SKILLS LIMITED

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Global Horizon Skills Limited in October 2014 when the quality of the education and training in Financial Services was evaluated as satisfactory.

The main areas for improvement were the need to:

- engage more strategically with all employers to ensure the planning and delivery of the programme meets the needs of all of the apprentices;
- address the satisfactory retention rates on both strands of the programme; and
- ensure that those apprentices with essential skill needs are supported in a more timely fashion in the workplace.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit during June 2015, with a follow-up inspection in December 2015.

In the interval since the original inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- five new financial services tutors have been appointed, with a breadth of experience and expertise in the sector;
- an increased range of financial services employers are participating in the programmes, including insurance brokers;
- the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII) pathway has been introduced, within the financial services provision, which better meets the needs of the insurance sector; and
- the personal training plans have been revised to better support target setting and the monitoring of the apprentices' progress.

Key findings

- The level of employer engagement has increased and the organisation has made a good start to working more strategically with an increased range of employers across the financial services sector.
- The planning for the provision and tracking of progress across the programme are more effective, including the introduction of improved initial planning and induction programmes, with greater involvement of the employers.
- The range of training and learning resources has been expanded to support more effectively the delivery of the provision, and particularly for the recently introduced CII pathway.
- The essential skills are planned more effectively and delivered in a timely fashion to meet the learning and development needs of the apprentices.

- The organisation needs to continue to address the retention, particularly on the level 2 ApprenticeshipsNI provision.

Overall outcome

In Financial Services, the quality of the education and training provided by Global Horizon Skills Limited is now good.

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