



Apprenticeship Employer Briefing

Ofsted Inspection Guide

This briefing provides guidance to apprenticeship employers who have apprentices studying at Teesside University, regarding their potential involvement in Ofsted Inspections.

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Introduction

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) are responsible for inspecting services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. They inspect and regulate organisations and individuals providing education including local authorities, care establishments, childminders, training providers, schools, independent training providers, Further Education colleges and Universities.

Teesside University is therefore subject to periodic assessments in line with the Further Education and Skills Handbook which covers the Higher Education sector [Further Education & Skills Handbook - Updated Jan 2024](#)

This briefing has been developed to explain what this means for you as an apprenticeship employer with Teesside University, should you be selected by Ofsted or the University to participate in an inspection.

The Inspection process involves an Ofsted team of Inspectors gathering evidence about the quality of the apprenticeship training that we deliver. A significant part of this evidence gathering is to talk to apprentices and their employers about their own individual experiences to build a picture of how our apprenticeship programmes operate.

Teesside University aims to provide its apprentices with the best possible training experience. We set and maintain high standards for teaching and learning across all our programmes, supported by robust quality assurance policies and procedures. For this reason, we welcome the opportunity an Ofsted Inspection process will provide, in order for us to learn about how the service we deliver meets your needs and how we can improve in the future.

If you would like to discuss anything contained in this briefing, then please do get in touch with us by emailing aad@tees.ac.uk

Section 1 - Ofsted Information

Who is Ofsted?

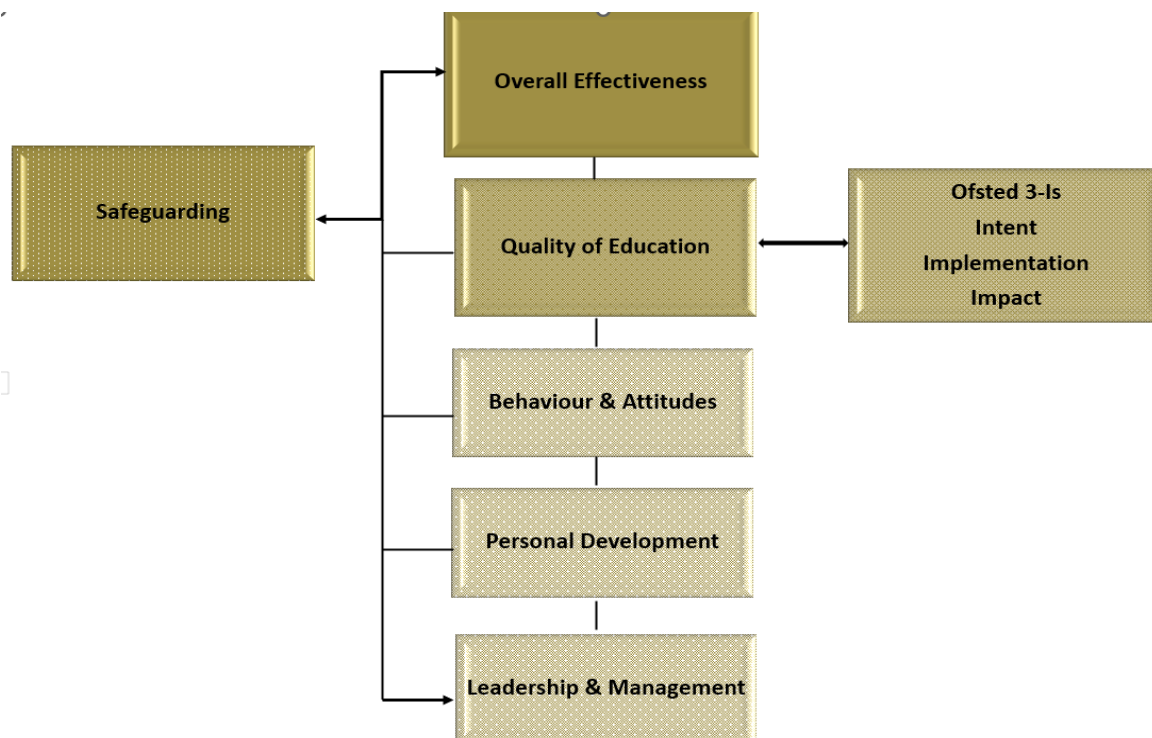
Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Amongst their remits, they conduct formal inspections of organisations that provide government funded education and skills, including schools, Further Education providers and, since April 2021, Higher Education providers offering apprenticeships at degree level.

Each Inspection involves a team of Inspectors reviewing and collating evidence about how the training provider delivers their programmes. They have specialist teams with expertise in subject areas and in the type of inspection that they carry out, and every inspection includes talking to apprentices, employers, and university staff about their experiences.

You can discover more about Ofsted and the work they undertake using this link [About Ofsted](#)

Ofsted's role is to ensure that all organisations providing education and training services in England do so to a high standard.

During the inspection process Inspectors will make judgements on the following areas:



These judgements contribute to a decision about the overall effectiveness of Teesside University as an Apprenticeship Training Provider. Ofsted will publish their full report within 6 weeks of the inspection awarding one of the following grades:

- Grade 1: outstanding
- Grade 2: good
- Grade 3: requires improvement
- Grade 4: inadequate

Section 2 - What an Ofsted visit will mean for you as an employer.

Why might my organisation be selected?

Please do not be concerned about an Ofsted visit. It is Teesside University that is being inspected not you, your organisation, or your apprentice(s). The Ofsted Inspector's conversation with you is focused on the service that the University provides to you and your apprentices during their apprenticeship.

Employers are selected to ensure a representative sample of the types of apprenticeship, employer, and of course on whether they are available during the time that the Inspection is taking place. Most employers will be selected by the Inspectors using data we supply for funding purposes although some may be identified by Teesside University.

This selection takes place during the 48 hours between Teesside University receiving notification from Ofsted and the start of the inspection. Some additional employers may be selected during the inspection e.g., due to illness of the original selected sample.

What will happen during an inspection visit?

Ofsted may request to visit your facilities, or they may conduct an interview online or by telephone. They will speak with you regarding your overall understanding of apprenticeships and progression of your apprentice(s). They want to understand from both employers and Teesside University how the apprenticeship has been structured and delivered to ensure apprentices can achieve their best potential, including the level of support available and provided throughout the duration of the apprenticeship.

The Inspectors use their time with you to talk about your experience of apprenticeships at Teesside University. We have listed some examples of the types of questions that an Inspector might ask you in Section 2 below.

How and when will we know if we are part of the Inspection?

Teesside University will receive notice of an inspection only **48 hours before** it is due to start. As soon as we are provided with a list of employers that Ofsted would like to talk to, a member of the **School Apprenticeship Team** will contact you to discuss your availability. They will be able to talk you through the process and answer questions you may have about the visit.

What if we are unable to make the time or date of the Ofsted visit?

The Ofsted team will be provided with a full list and contact details of all employers and their apprentices, so if you are selected but cannot make the time, please do not worry. We really appreciate that the short notice before the inspection places a significant strain

on your diary, and we will be able to identify other employers if you are not able to take part.

If you are unable to attend a booked meeting, please let the University Team know as soon as possible by emailing aad@tees.ac.uk so that we can arrange an alternative employer meeting.

As part of a full inspection, you also have the option to feedback your views online. The link to the Ofsted survey will be provided to all employers at the time of the inspection. Similarly, your apprentices will also receive an online questionnaire for their views. The feedback is via a secure platform hosted by Ofsted and the university will not have sight of the responses.

What should we say to the Inspectors?

It is important to be truthful with the Inspectors so that they get an accurate view of Teesside University as an apprenticeship training provider. Your contribution will allow us to ensure our continuous improvement process captures the views of all stakeholders. We hope that your experience to date has been positive but if there is something that you are not happy with, please let us know by emailing aad@tees.ac.uk so that we can discuss any concerns that you may have.

Section 3 - Typical Questions you may be asked and Sources of Information

It is not necessary to prepare anything for the Inspector before their visit. Their session with you will focus on your apprenticeships with the University and your own experiences of employing apprentices. These are some of the questions you may get asked:

Ofsted Example Questions	Further information
Why did you decide to recruit and/or train your staff through an apprenticeship?	
Why did you select Teesside University as your Apprenticeship Provider?	
How many apprentices do you currently have and what standards are they on? And historically?	
What are the expected benefits of this apprenticeship to your business and/or your employees?	
How do the KSBs meet the regional needs/local context?	

How did you decide which employee(s) would be the most suitable for this apprenticeship? How does this happen, involvement in discussion of suitability of job roles, commitment to the apprenticeship, devising a training plan?	
Will your apprentice complete a qualification as part of their apprenticeship? If so, who awards the qualification?	
How involved were you with the initial assessment / on-boarding of your employee to the apprenticeship programme?	
To what extent do you have an input into the curriculum planning/design/delivery?	
What knowledge do you have of your learners' progress?	
What are your responsibilities as an employer / mentor of an apprentice?	Refer to training plan.
Is the off-the-job training relevant, up-to-date and of use to you? are you advised of attendance at off-the-job training? do you offer any additional training courses offered outside the standard?	
How much input do you have into progress/tripartite reviews? What was discussed at the last tripartite review which had a positive impact on your apprentices' progress?	
When you speak to the University are the staff knowledgeable and able to answer your questions?	
Is the off-the-job training your apprentice receives up-to-date and relevant to their professional development requirements and your business needs?	
Describe how the University ensures that apprentices receive support, feedback, and any relevant additional training to aid successful completion of the programme.	Refer to Section 5
How do you ensure that the apprentice completes their training within the allocated minimum average of 6 hours off the job training per week?	
Are you aware whether your apprentice needs additional support to meet the Math's and English requirements of the apprenticeship?	
What would you do if you were unhappy with any part of your apprentice's programme?	Refer to footnote ¹

¹ Please refer to TU Complaints policy: [TU Apprenticeships Complaints policy & Procedure](#)

Do you have any examples of career advancement etc. for your apprentices whilst on/at the end of their apprenticeship?	
Are you aware of what is meant by Gateway and EPA and what is your involvement in these processes?	
What checks have been carried out on your health and safety in the workplace – risk assessments of activities, health and safety policies and procedures, employer insurance etc.?	

Section 4 - Safeguarding, the Prevent Duty, British Values and Equality & Diversity

Safeguarding ²

Safeguarding is the overarching term used to describe the protection of the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals. Under legislation, all parties involved in an apprenticeship must take reasonable action to minimise risks to apprentices. This includes aspects of the apprentice's experience, both in and outside of the workplace, as well as during any attendance at university.

All education providers have a legal duty to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, and adults at risk and safeguard those vulnerable from all forms of abuse, harm and neglect and to respond where concerns are raised.

The term Children includes those under 18 years old. Adults at risk are defined as over 18, who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Many areas are considered to fall under the definition of safeguarding, including:

- Abuse – (emotional, physical, sexual, financial)
- Online abuse - (cyber bullying, and inciting extremism and radicalisation)
- Discrimination
- Neglect / Self harm
- Forced marriage
- Mental health
- Radicalisation
- Modern Slavery

² Please refer to TU Apprenticeship Safeguarding Policy [TU Apprenticeships Safeguarding Policy](#)

- Sexual Exploitation

The University fully recognises that health, wellbeing, ability, disability and need for care, can affect an individual's resilience. We also recognise that some individuals experience barriers, for example in communicating, in raising concerns, or seeking help and these factors can vary at different points in an individual's life. We aim to ensure our students and apprentices are supported to reach their potential and to access support when they need it.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If an apprentice classed as an adult at risk, discloses anything that gives you reason to suspect that they may be at risk of harm, you should:

- Listen carefully and take what is being said seriously.
- Advise the apprentice that you have a duty to report concerns and that you cannot promise confidentiality.
- After the conversation, write down what the apprentice has said in their own words.
- Contact our safeguarding lead without delay by emailing Nadine Baister, Senior Quality & Compliance Manager n.baister@tees.ac.uk

Our Safeguarding policy is available here [TU Apprenticeships Safeguarding Policy](#) and on our website with comprehensive school contact details [Safeguarding | Professional Apprenticeships | Teesside University](#)

Prevent Duty - Definition and key threats

As part of the Counterterrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015, universities are required to pay '*due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism*'.

There is no single way of identifying a person who may be vulnerable to extremist ideology, and it is often the culmination of a number of influences. These can include family, friends, or relationships they have made online. Extremism can also include non-violent action.

The University is committed to engaging with its students in relation to the Prevent Duty requirements and works with Teesside University Students' Union in this regard. This engagement includes collaboration and consultation on Prevent Duty policy requirements, as developed and delivered by the University, representation of Student Union Officers and Management on the Prevent & Safeguarding Executive and Working Groups, and ongoing dialogue to ensure that the arrangements between both parties are joined up and effective.

The Government has provided the following prevent definitions :

Terrorism: The use or threat of action (serious violence against a person, serious damage to property, endangering a person's life, serious risk to the health and safety of the public, serious interference with / disruption of an electronic system), designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, or made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.

Extremism: Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Radicalisation: The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Warning signs to look out for may include:

- Changes in behaviour – significant changes in appearance and/or friendship groups
- Unwilling to engage with those of a different gender, religion, or race
- Becoming more argumentative / unwilling to listen to the views of others
- Accessing and/or showing sympathy for extremist material

Role of the University

- Provide relevant training for University staff so they understand the obligations the University has under Prevent Duty and how to manage risks and concerns.
- Have clear procedures in place so that any concerns can immediately be brought to specialist attention.
- Provide a forum for apprentices to explore these matters.
- Provide a contact for any further information regarding the Prevent Duty.
- Ensure apprentices can express views in non-extremist ways and create an environment that encourages respectful free speech.

Role of the employer

- Demonstrate a commitment to British values.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Reporting a Prevent concern

If you are concerned that an apprentice could be in danger of radicalisation, then please contact your school apprenticeship team without delay.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

At Teesside University we are committed to promoting diversity, & inclusion and we believe individuals should be able to achieve their full potential. Within the University this means providing an inclusive environment, raising awareness of difference, removing identified barriers to achievement and providing development opportunities to all.

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is reflected in our values of:

- Embracing diversity and actively opposing and eradicating prejudice.
- Empowering individuals and teams to enhance their contribution to the future aims and strategic direction of the University.
- Communicating openly honestly and respectfully at all times.
- Taking responsibility and demonstrating leadership.

We view this work as critical in realising our mission to contribute to the economic, social and cultural success of our region and the communities we serve. We draw on a range of guidance and evidence to ensure we continue to understand, appreciate and learn from the experiences of our diverse campus community and the context in which the University operates. We utilise the most appropriate information on a case-by-case basis, guided by our partnership with key organisations, and this is integrated within our policies and procedures to ensure equal protection for all.

The following associations help to guide and support our work across Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

- Stonewall Workplace Equality Index
- Athena Swan
- Race at Work Charter
- Disability Confident Leader
- Hart Gable/LGBT Advance
- The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism
- Tees Valley Equality and Inclusion Network

Fundamental British Values

British Values are in congruence with the University's values objectives and policies. They are embedded in our culture, customs and practice. They are part of everything we do, including the way we design and deliver our training. Our apprentices leave Teesside university with the awareness associated with being part of a culture that advocates these Values.

British Values	How we promote each value:
<p>Democracy A culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Teesside Student voice, opportunities to feedback through focus groups, surveys and shape the experience for yourself and future apprentices. Alongside taking part in national and regional elections, we encourage apprentices to become involved through the Teesside Student elections, to represent apprentices on university committees.</p>
<p>The rule of law The need for rules to make a happy, safe, and secure environment to live and work.</p>	<p>Student Code of conduct, promoting fair and equal treatment, supported through our university regulations, policies, and procedures in our Student Handbooks.</p>
<p>Individual liberty Protection of your rights and the rights of others around you.</p>	<p>Respect for our freedoms as individuals and understanding the circumstances where freedoms may be restricted to protect our safety.</p>
<p>Mutual respect Recognising the difference of others and respecting their individuality and opinions although you may not agree.</p>	<p>Respect for all backgrounds, faiths, and beliefs. The diversity of our staff and students creates a positive and vibrant community in which to learn.</p>
<p>Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs Understanding that we all don't share the same beliefs and values. Respecting the values, ideas and beliefs of others whilst not imposing our own onto them.</p>	<p>Everyone should have the right to practice their religion or hold their own beliefs free from prejudice or discrimination.</p>

As an employer of apprentices, it is trusted that you will provide a work environment which promotes these values throughout your organisation.

Section 5 - How Teesside university supports Employers and Apprentices

Vision and Mission

From developing outstanding degree apprenticeships tailored to industry, to addressing the societal challenges on a global scale, our work is always relevant and purpose driven.

We value education and research which is innovative, creative and supports the development of solutions to real world challenges. We work with individuals and businesses to develop solutions that deliver ambition today.

Teesside will be a leading University with an international reputation for academic excellence that provides an outstanding student and learning experience underpinned by research, enterprise, and the professions. Focused on making a real difference to the lives of people and the success of businesses and the economy, we challenge expectations and push the boundaries of what is possible.

We pride ourselves on the quality of our apprenticeships and were rated 'Outstanding' for apprenticeship provision by Ofsted in 2019.

Our Investment in Apprenticeships

Teesside University currently has over 2,600 apprentices working towards completion of their apprenticeships, with an anticipated 3,000 by September 2024.

Teesside offers a varied range of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships across its five Academic Schools, offering over 39 apprenticeships in a number of specialisms such as Engineering and Computing, Health & Life Sciences, Business & Management, Social Sciences, Humanities and Law, and Creative Arts.

Please refer to our website for a comprehensive list of our apprenticeship offer: [Degree Apprenticeship Courses](#)

Employer Plus

Teesside University's Employer Plus is a comprehensive support initiative that offers:

- Dedicated account management, with personalised support for workforce planning and talent management, ensuring strategic alignment with organisational goals.
- Recruitment and match-making services, to connect organisations with skilled talent. We will guide and support you from vacancy to appointment, finding the best apprentices with technical and motivational ability for your business needs.
- Ongoing employer mentor training gives employers the tools to provide guidance and support to apprentices, ensuring that mentors understand the regulations and compliance risks.
- Collaboration through events such as the Employer Forum, Apprenticeship Festival and employer sector events, fostering networking and knowledge exchange.
- Support to navigate and optimise the government portal - Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) - to manage apprenticeship funding.
- Support with levy transfers - ensuring optimal use of unspent apprenticeship funds.
- Circulated framework tenders to share success stories and case studies to provide

valuable insights and benchmarking for achievement of excellence in apprenticeships.

Working with you to support your apprentices

- **Initial Assessment and Eligibility Checks**

The apprenticeship is designed to bring new knowledge, skills, and behaviours into your organisation and our on-boarding processes help to identify those who would most benefit from development ensuring you maximise your apprenticeship levy/employer contribution. All apprentices undertake an initial assessment with support from their line manager to determine eligibility and identify the level of training required. The apprentice's manager has knowledge of the apprentice's strengths and areas for improvement makes them an integral part of this process and helps in the development of the apprentices individualised training plan.

- **On-boarding Support**

Teesside work with you to ensure that all contracts, agreements, and funding requirements are completed within the timescales defined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

- **Tripartite reviews**

These reviews are mandatory and are designed to allow you, your apprentice, and the Apprenticeship Quality Coach to review progress to date and set targets. Your involvement means that opportunities to practice the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that your apprentice has learned, can be identified or developed.

- **Change in Circumstances**

Changes to mentor, line manager or your organisation name or ownership can affect apprenticeship funding and we will work with you to ensure that all contracts and agreements, are updated to avoid disruption to your apprentice's programme. We can only do this if you keep us informed of changes before they occur, so please email your school apprenticeship team as early as possible to let us know of any changes.

- **End Point Assessment (EPA)**

In consultation with you, we determine whether your apprentice is End Point Assessment ready. If your apprentice is not able to complete their EPA with their cohort, we will collaborate with you to determine a revised timescale for completion and the support required to ensure a mutually positive outcome.

- **Academic Coach/ Apprenticeship Quality Coaches**

Academic and Quality Coaches provide apprentice support to enable them to translate their academic learning on a practical level to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the apprenticeship standard. The academic coaches support each apprentice through 1-1 meetings and prepare learners for their End Point

Assessment (EPA) by advising them on submissions, what they need to do to achieve pass, merit and distinction, and giving them insights into what they might expect at their EPA.

- **Tripartite reviews**

Tripartite reviews are designed to allow the employer, apprentice and the Quality Coach to regularly review (10 – 12 weeks) apprentices' progress, set targets and review how the training they are undertaking is benefiting you as an employer. As an employer you can support this process, identifying where the apprenticeship knowledge skills and behaviours have been utilised within the job role and explore further development and support opportunities that could be provided in the future.

- **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**

Apprentices have access to all of their learning materials through a dedicated virtual learning environment (Blackboard Ultra), allowing them to access study materials and extra-curricular activities wherever they go. They can see feedback from lecturers which will allow them to develop their knowledge and skills even further.

- **Online E-Portfolio**

Smart Assessor in our apprenticeship portal to ensure that your apprentice is on track and meeting the mandatory needs of the apprenticeship funding. It is the system used for tripartite reviews and off the job recording and as an employer you will have access to this to track progress.

- **Student Wellbeing and Disability Support**

The Student Life team are the central point of contact for information, advice and guidance for students, and the co-ordination of support for learners with specific learning support needs or impairments. They offer professional and confidential advice and guidance to help you make the most of your time at the University and to access the many resources available to you. You can find information regarding wellbeing support within this link [Teesside University - Student Support](#)

- **Teesside Students' Union (TSU)**

The TSU has a very close relationship with the University but operates independently. It is completely student led with three Student Officers elected each year to oversee how it's run and represents students to the University and external bodies.

- **Careers Support**

Training Providers are required to provide Careers information, education, advice, and guidance to apprentices whilst on programme. Our award-winning Student Futures, careers and employability team are always on hand to support you on your career path. Apprentices have access to direct support for CV writing, application forms and interviews along with current market intelligence, [Careers | Student Futures | Teesside University](#).

Also provided is information on occupational maps which are a simplified way of

showing the relationships that exist between education, qualifications, apprenticeships and occupations in England. They help people to find their way through the careers and training landscape more easily, [Occupational Maps](#)

- **IT Services and Facilities**

We provide excellent systems and services, and friendly support to show apprentices how to use them. Whether the apprentice wants to use high performance computing facilities and leading industry software, develop their IT skills, or just connect to the network, Teesside can help.

- **Department for Education DfE**

The DfE sends out automated email links to employers, three months after their organisation engages in apprenticeship training. Following this, employers can give anonymous feedback in relation to the training provided by Teesside University. Results will subsequently appear on the training provider's Find Apprenticeship Training webpage [Apprenticeship training courses \(education.gov.uk\)](#) giving prospective employers and learners the opportunity to view the feedback provided to date. We encourage and appreciate our employers providing feedback within this platform.

Thank You

Please accept our anticipated appreciation of your support, if you are selected to participate in any aspect of future Ofsted inspections and wish you continued success.