



Employer Briefing

Ofsted Inspection

This Briefing provides guidance to Apprenticeship Employers who have apprentices studying at Cranfield University/MKU regarding their potential involvement in Ofsted Inspections.

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Introduction

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, who inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. They inspect and regulate thousands of organisations and individuals providing education to include; local authorities, care establishments, childminders and training providers, to include; schools, independent training providers, Further Education and Universities.

Cranfield University/MKU is therefore subject to periodic assessments in line with the Further Education and Skills Handbook which covers the Higher Education sector [Further education and skills handbook for September 2023](#)

We have compiled this briefing to explain what this means for you as an apprenticeship employer with Cranfield University/MKU, should you be selected by Ofsted or the University to participate.

The Inspection process involves an Ofsted team of Inspectors gathering evidence about the quality of the apprenticeship training that we deliver. An important 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 programmes operate.

Cranfield University/MKU seeks 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 the Ofsted Inspection process will give us to learn about how the service we provide for you meets your needs as an individual and how we can improve in the future.

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

Section 1 - What an Ofsted visit means for you as an employer

Why might my organisation be selected?

Please do not worry about an Ofsted visit. It is Cranfield University/MKU that is being inspected not you, your organisation, or your apprentice(s). The Ofsted Inspector's conversation with you is about 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 Cranfield University/MKU. This selection takes place during the 48 hours between Cranfield 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/by telephone. They will speak with you regarding your overall understanding of apprenticeships and progression of your apprentices. They want to understand from both employers and Cranfield University/MKU how the apprenticeship has been structured and delivered to ensure apprentices can achieve the very best of their potential – including the level of support available and provided throughout.

The Inspectors use their time with you to talk about your experience of apprenticeships at Cranfield University/MKU. 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 we are part of the Inspection?

Cranfield University/MKU will only receive notice of an inspection 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 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 I cannot make the time or date of the visit?

The Ofsted team have 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 Apprenticeship Office know as soon as possible by emailing ofstedinspection@cranfield.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 site of the responses.

What should I say to the Inspectors?

It is important to be honest with the Inspectors so that they get an accurate view of Cranfield University/MKU as an apprenticeship training provider. Your input 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 apprenticeships@cranfield.ac.uk so that we can discuss any concerns with you.

Section 2 - Typical Questions you may be asked and Sources of Information

There is no need 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 might get asked:

Example Questions	Further Information
Why did you decide to recruit and/or train your staff through an apprenticeship?	
Why did you select Cranfield as your Apprenticeship Provider?	
Which Apprenticeship Standard is your apprentice(s) working towards?	
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?	
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?	
Are there any obvious flaws in the sequencing of your apprentices' learning?	
What are your responsibilities as an employer / mentor of an apprentice?	Refer to the Commitment Statement
Will you be providing any training to the apprentice?	
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.	Please see Section 4 for information
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 Maths and English requirements of the apprenticeship?	

Example Questions	Further Information
Do your apprentices require additional learning support, and if so, how has Cranfield supported them with this?	
What have your apprentices learnt whilst on this training programme that has impacted your business so far?	
What is your understanding of the Gateway and End Point Assessment (EPA) process? And, has anyone spoken to you about preparing your apprentice for this?	
Do you have any plans for career advancement for your apprentice(s) during or at the end of the apprenticeship?	
What measures/processes do you and the University have in place regarding the following: Health and Safety, Prevent, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, British Values	Please see Section 3 for information
What would you do if you were unhappy with any part of your apprentice's programme?	See our Complaints Policy ¹
To what extent are you encouraged to share your feedback with the University?	
Based on your experience of Cranfield's apprenticeship programme, are there areas that could be improved?	
Would you recommend the Cranfield to other employers?	

Section 3 - Safeguarding, the Prevent Duty, Equality and Diversity, and British Values

Safeguarding

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 him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Safeguarding concerns may include:

- Abuse – Physical / Sexual / Psychological / Financial
- Discrimination
- Neglect / Self-Neglect
- Modern Slavery

¹ See Handbooks>Apprenticeship complaints policy at <https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/about/governance-and-policies/quality-assurance>

- Radicalisation
- Sexual Exploitation
- Online abuse including cyber bullying, and inciting extremism and radicalisation

The University 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.
- Tell the apprentice 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 team without delay by emailing studentadvice@cranfield.ac.uk.

Our trained staff will be able to offer - advice and guidance, co-ordinate support and escalate concerns to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Report and Support

You can also report incidents of inappropriate/unacceptable behaviour via "[Report + Support](#)", an accessible and safe channel to report incidents in relation to both student or staff (including sexual misconduct, bullying and harassment) either anonymously or with contact details, as well as access to additional online materials and support

Our Safeguarding policy is available on our website [Safeguarding \(cranfield.ac.uk\)](http://Safeguarding(cranfield.ac.uk))

Prevent Duty

The University has a duty of care to its students. Under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, this includes a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent Duty.

The legislation does not seek to deter freedom of speech or independent thought, instead, it aims to protect individuals from being radicalised for the means of terrorism.

The Government provides the following 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
- Becoming more argumentative / unwilling to listen to the views of others
- Unwilling to engage with those of a different gender, religion, or race
- Accessing and/or showing sympathy for extremist material

Reporting a Prevent concern

If you are concerned that an apprentice could be in danger of radicalisation, then please contact Cranfield without delay by emailing studentadvice@cranfield.ac.uk

Equality and Diversity

At Cranfield University/MKU, we are committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, and that is why we ask you to complete an 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' module as part of your course.

The implementation of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Valuing Diversity Code of Practice, accompanied with 'Our Values' are helping us to maintain and promote an inclusive environment for our staff and student community. [Equity, diversity and inclusion \(Cranfield University.ac.uk\)](https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion)

Our EDI Strategy Plan sets out our ambition up to 2027:

- A diverse organisation that is more representative of our local and global communities and partners than we are in 2022
- An inclusive organisation where all our staff and students have a voice and feel safe (physically and psychologically) and respected, and where everyone can fulfil their own potential.
- An organisation where EDI is strongly integrated across all our activities, and everyone feels confident when talking about EDI matters.
- An organisation that continues to take decisions and actions which are informed by our data.

British Values

The University has a responsibility to promote British Values as part of its educational offering to all apprentices, to ensure that they leave the University prepared for life in modern Britain and become valuable and responsible members of society who treat others with respect and tolerance, regardless of their background. The four definitions of British values are as follows:

British Values	How we promote each value:
Democracy A culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities.	Cranfield 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 Cranfield Student Association (CSA) elections to represent apprentices on university committees.
The rule of law The need for rules to make a happy, safe, and secure environment to live and work.	Student Code of conduct, promoting fair and equal treatment, supported through our University regulations, policies, and procedures in our Student Handbooks.
Individual liberty Protection of your rights and the rights of others around you.	Respect for our freedoms as individuals and understanding the circumstances where freedoms may be restricted to protect our safety.
Mutual respect and 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.	Respect for all backgrounds, faiths, and beliefs. The diversity of our staff and students creates a positive and vibrant community in which to learn.

British Values are in harmony with the University's Objects, Values, and policies. They are embedded in our culture, customs, and practice. As such they are part of everything we do, including the way we design and deliver our training. Our apprentices leave Cranfield with the sensibilities associated with being part of a culture that espouses these Values.

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

Section 4 - How Cranfield supports Employers and Apprentices

Background

Cranfield University's mission is to create leaders in technology and management, unlocking the potential of people and organisations by partnering with business and governments to deliver transformational research, postgraduate education, and development. Cranfield University was the first Level 7 apprenticeship provider, delivering the Systems Engineering for Defence Capability apprenticeship in 2016. Cranfield continued to be at the forefront of apprenticeship

delivery by being one of the first universities to deliver the Senior Leader Degree Apprenticeship in 2017.

Our Investment in Apprenticeships

Cranfield University has over 1100 current apprentices and nearly 500 alumni apprentices who have successfully completed and passed their End Point Assessment. Cranfield offers a variety of apprenticeships specialising in Engineering and Management, our apprenticeships sit within the following themes: Business and Administration, Digital, Engineering and Manufacturing, Legal, Finance and Accounting, and Transport and Logistics.

Cranfield has been part of several Trailblazer groups to support the development of apprenticeship standards at level 6 and 7, working with industry to understand their current requirements and how Cranfield can support the delivery of the knowledge skills and behaviour required through its prior industry experience.

How we work with you to support your apprentices

- **Recruitment**

We can assist in your recruitment of apprentices by listing opportunities on the Government's Find an Apprenticeship website.

- **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 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**

Cranfield 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 designed to allow you, your apprentice, and the Apprenticeship Tutor/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.

- **Changes in Circumstance**

Changes to your organisation name or ownership can affect apprenticeship funding and we will work with you to ensure that all contracts, agreements, and levy connections 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 apprenticeships@cranfield.ac.uk as early as possible to let us know of any changes.

- **End Point Assessment (EPA)**

We consult with you to determine whether your apprentice is ready to be put forward for their End Point Assessment. If your apprentice is not able to complete their EPA with their cohort, we will work with you to determine a revised timescale for completion and the support required to ensure a positive result.

How we work with your apprentices to support their apprenticeship

- **Apprenticeship Tutors/Coaches**

Tutors and Coaches provide apprentice individually tailored support to enable them to translate their academic learning to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and behaviors required by the apprenticeship standard. They coach and 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 (TPRs)**

TPRs are designed to allow the employer, apprentice and the Tutor/Coach to periodically review apprentices' progress, set targets and review how the training they are undertaking is benefiting you as an employer. As an employer you can support the process, in identifying where the apprenticeship knowledge skills and behaviors 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 can access all their learning materials through a dedicated virtual learning environment (Canvas or Blackboard), allowing them to access study materials wherever they go. They can see feedback from lecturers which will allow them to develop their knowledge and skills even further.

- **Online Portfolio**

PebblePad provides structure for portfolio building to ensure that your apprentice is on track and meeting all the needs of the apprenticeship programme. Accessible by your apprentice, you, and your apprenticeship Tutor/Coach, PebblePad allows reflection on what has been learned and evidence how this applied in your workplace. PebblePad lets you see how your apprentice is progressing with their studies and what needs to be completed to ensure they are ready for their End Point Assessment.

- **Dedicated Student Academic Support (SAS) Team**

The SAS team will mainly support your apprentice with academic progression but can usually assist with any problems experienced on the taught course. They are the best source of information about timetables, modules, and assessments.

- **Student Wellbeing and Disability Support**

The Student Wellbeing and Disability Support 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, counselling services, disability and learning support by visiting <https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/study/life-on-campus/wellbeing-and-support>.

- **The Cranfield Students' Association (CSA)**

The CSA represents all Cranfield University students. It is run by a team of elected students and a small team of staff, overseen by independent Trustees. Representation and promotion of the student voice are at the heart of the CSA's objectives, and many opportunities are provided for students to express their opinions on their Cranfield/MKU experience.

- **Changes in Circumstances**

Changes to an apprentice's job role or employment terms and conditions can put the apprenticeship at risk. Apprentices and employers should keep Cranfield informed of changes before they occur to enable the University to work with you and the apprentice to protect your apprenticeship programme. Please email apprenticeships@cranfield.ac.uk as early as possible to let us know of any changes.

- **Careers Support**

All Training Providers are required to provide Careers information, education, advice, and guidance to apprentices whilst on programme. The Career Development Service supports Apprentices to elevate their careers. They have access to CV and LinkedIn profile critiquing software VMock, 'Graduates First' psychometric test practice site and a host of resources to assist in career development. These range from Labour Market Information, CV and Cover Letter writing, Interviews and Assessment Centres right through to Negotiating Salary and Contract Terms. Apprentices can also benefit from Cranfield's mentoring programme, having access to more than 400 alumni offering careers support in their specific sectors.

- **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, Cranfield 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 Cranfield University/MKU. Results will subsequently appear on the training provider's Find Apprenticeship Training webpage [Apprenticeship training courses \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about) 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.

Section 5 - Ofsted Information

Who is Ofsted?

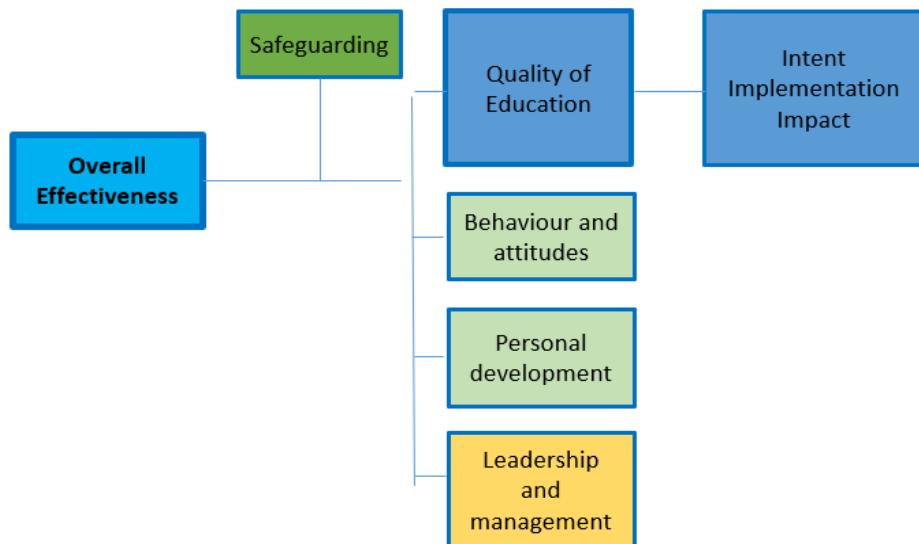
Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Amongst their remits, they conduct formal inspections of organisations that provide government funded education and skills, including schools, Further Education providers and, since April 2021, Higher Education providers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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about>.

Ofsted's role is to make sure 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 judgement about the overall effectiveness of Cranfield University/MKU 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

Thank You

We would like to express our anticipated thanks if you are selected to participate in any aspect of future Ofsted inspections and wish you continued success.