

# External review of Modern Apprenticeship delivery by Road Haulage Association

## A report by HM Inspectors

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<b>Head of Training &amp; Sales</b>	<b>Brian Kenny</b>
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<b>Provider type</b>	<b>Independent Training Provider</b>
<b>Lead HMI</b>	<b>Joe Mulholland</b>
<b>Apprentice numbers</b>	<b>58</b>

## 1. Background

External reviews of Modern Apprenticeship providers are planned collaboratively between the provider and HM Inspectors. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) provide information regarding provider performance including key data to support this process.

During the review, a team of HM Inspectors evaluated the quality of training provision and the experiences of apprentices and key stakeholders such as employers. During the visit, the team met with staff, learners and other stakeholders and explored the quality of training delivery, how well the needs of apprentices are met, and approaches to improving quality of provision.

This report summarises the findings from the visit, awards grades for the three elements and highlights areas of positive practice, areas for development, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the provider, Scottish Government, and SDS. For colleges, the report will be shared with the College Principals and Board or Regional Strategic Body, and Scottish Funding Council (SFC). An accompanying short report will be published on Education Scotland's website.

## 2. The provider and its context

The Road Haulage Association (RHA) are an independent training provider (ITP) and a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) approved centre. RHA have offices in Bathgate, Bradford, and Peterborough.

Established in 1944, the RHA is a member-led trade association supporting the road haulage industry. RHA members have access to technical and professional services to help them comply with industry requirements. The RHA delivers two Freight Logistics MA qualifications at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 6 and 7.

Apprentices are typically adults employed by RHA members who undertake the MA alongside gaining a vehicle licence for the road haulage industry.

### 3. Outcomes of external review

The grades for each of the three elements are:

Leadership and Quality Culture	Very Good
Service Delivery	Very Good
Safeguarding and meeting the needs of apprentices	Very Good

### 4. Summary of review findings

A summary of the findings of HM Inspectors are set out below.

#### 4.1 Leadership and Quality Culture - Grade: Very Good

##### 4.1.1 Securing improvement of quality and impact of training

###### Areas of positive progress

- RHA staff use established quality assurance arrangements well to fulfil required awarding body criteria. This ensures that the delivery of MA programmes is in accordance with industry standards.
- Managers meet regularly with staff to support them to evaluate operational performance. Outcomes are captured and support proactive action planning for continuous improvement. Actions arising are monitored well at follow-up meetings.
- All staff collaborate closely with professional awarding bodies to identify appropriate opportunities for professional development. This helps staff in maintaining knowledge of current industry practices and standards. Relevant programme information is shared comprehensively with staff to ensure they are kept informed and updated.
- RHA managers have invested in relevant educational resources and materials to support apprentices, including an HGV driving simulator. This approach ensures staff deliver high quality apprentice training experiences and outcomes.
- All apprentices value highly the adaptable approaches adopted by RHA staff. This includes varying methods of evidence collection, flexible communication, and planning training activities around apprentice work commitments. These measures enable apprentices to tailor their educational journey to their individual needs and work schedules.
- RHA staff plan carefully medical evaluations of prospective apprentices' suitability for the MA programme at an entry stage. This includes appropriate medical and physical fitness assessments to ensure apprentices are able to cope with the demands of the industry.

###### Area for development

- There are limited opportunities for apprentices to provide formal feedback on their MA programme experience. As a result, self-evaluation outcomes are not sufficiently informed by apprentice views.

## 4.2 Service Delivery - Grade: Very Good

### 4.2.1 Delivery of training

#### Areas of positive progress

- Almost all apprentices participate in induction activities and understand the MA framework and the activities they will be undertaking. Apprentices value their induction experiences and highlight that participation helped to improve their self-confidence.
- All staff communicate regularly with apprentices to assess progress made towards their learning objectives. They encourage apprentices to take ownership of their educational journey. They are proactive in identifying specific support requirements for individual apprentices.
- All apprentices have good access to training resources that are appropriate, relevant, and of industry standard. This is helpful in ensuring apprentices are well equipped for the world of work.
- All employers value the MA programme and how it supports new entrants to the industry and assists experienced workers in progressing to a higher level of employment. Employers highlight the useful contribution of the programme to the sector in helping address notable recruitment challenges.
- RHA assessors participate regularly in peer observation activities. These experiences help to increase their knowledge and develop their assessment techniques and encourages assessors to adopt best practice approaches.
- All apprentices comment that assessors provide timely, supportive, and constructive feedback. This enables apprentices to gain a better understanding of their progress, what they do well and what they need to achieve.

#### Areas for development

- Apprentices are not sufficiently aware of when they are completing elements of the embedded MA programme alongside the required industry driving licence.

### 4.2.2 Staff reflection on provision to improve training

#### Areas of positive progress

- RHA quality assurance arrangements meet awarding body assessment requirements effectively. Assessors collaborate well in standardisation and internal verification activities to ensure consistent standards are applied during training and assessment.
- All staff are offered and participate in professional learning through awarding bodies that are industry relevant and provide appropriate certification. This helps ensure RHA staff remain in line with industry standards and best practice approaches.
- RHA staff collaborate well with employers and apprentices to select optional units from the MA framework that align closely with their respective job roles. This approach supports apprentices to tailor their programme to meet their individual needs.

## Area for development

- None identified.

## 4.3 Safeguarding and meeting the needs of apprentices - Grade: Very Good

### 4.3.1 Achieving and maintaining high levels of service delivery

#### Areas of positive progress

- RHA staff routinely and timeously inform employers about the progress their apprentices are making. These updates allow employers to identify areas where apprentices require further support to improve their skills and knowledge.
- RHA staff tailor the length of programmes to meet the needs of individual apprentices and employers. This allows employers to coordinate the timings of training and assessment activities to align well with their business operations.
- RHA assessors work well with apprentices with identified learning support needs. Timely support is provided, with reasonable adjustments made to assessment methods to ensure all apprentices are supported to succeed.

#### Area for development

- The signposting, development and monitoring of meta skills is not fully integrated into the delivery of the MA programme. As a result, most apprentices are unable to identify how they are developing these skills.

### 4.3.2 Adherence to statutory principles and guidance

#### Areas of positive progress

- Staff implement health and safety policies and procedures effectively. These arrangements are explained during induction and reinforced throughout training and assessment activities. This approach helps create a safe working environment for apprentices.
- RHA assessors understand the benefits of good equality and diversity practices and are proactive in ensuring these are promoted to apprentices, employers, and to school age learners during careers events.
- All staff engage in mandatory safeguarding training which is refreshed regularly. This training ensures staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify and respond to any safeguarding concerns that may arise.
- Apprentices are encouraged to maintain their physical and mental health wellbeing throughout their training and know how to seek help when they feel they require it.
- RHA staff promote the MA programme well to share career opportunities and raise awareness of the MA programme and pathways into the industry.

#### Area for development

- None Identified

### 4.3.3 Apprentice progress and achievement of individual outcomes

#### Areas of positive progress

- RHA managers ensure that apprentices attain well. Apprentice completion rates are high and are above SDS targets.
- The rate of successful completion for apprentices on the Freight Logistics MA programme is currently 75.6% which is just above the SDS target and almost 3% above the sector average for this framework.
- Almost all apprentices are informed of career progression opportunities and understand how to advance their skills and knowledge to achieve their career goals. All apprentices who complete the MA programme value highly the support from RHA staff and the training they receive.

#### Areas for development

- The number of apprentices registered on MA programmes who are female, care experienced, from a minority ethnic background, or who have a disability are currently below national MA averages.

### 5. Main points for action

There are no main points for action.

### 6. Examples of highly effective practice

There are no examples of highly effective practice.

### 7. What happens next?

HM Inspectors are confident that the provider has the capacity to continue to improve and HM Inspectors will make no further visits to the provider as a result of this review.

**Joe Mulholland**  
HM Inspector

## Appendix 1 Grades used in reporting

A common grading scale is used in making judgements for provider reviews:

- Grade 1 EXCELLENT – Outstanding and sector leading
- Grade 2 VERY GOOD – Major strengths
- Grade 3 GOOD – Important strengths with some areas for improvement
- Grade 4 SATISFACTORY - Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- Grade 5 WEAK – Important weaknesses
- Grade 6 UNSATISFACTORY – Major weaknesses

### Summary

- An evaluation of **excellent** applies to training which is of a very high quality. An evaluation of *excellent* represents an outstanding standard of training which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the current provision. It implies that very high-levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.
- An evaluation of **very good** applies to training characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish apprentices' experiences. While an evaluation of *very good* represents a high standard of training, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to provide training without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the provider will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.
- An evaluation of **good** applies to training characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of *good* represents a standard of training in which the strengths have a significant positive impact. However, the quality of apprentices' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the provider should seek to improve further the areas of important strength but take action to address the areas for improvement.
- An evaluation of **satisfactory** applies to training characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of *satisfactory* indicates that apprentices' have access to a basic level of training. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on apprentices' experiences. However, while the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of apprentices' experiences. It implies that the provider should take action to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.
- An evaluation of **weak** applies to training which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of *weak* may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish apprentices' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the provider.
- An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** applies when there are major weaknesses in training, requiring immediate remedial action. The training experience for apprentices is at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for training evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the immediate support given by the provider.

## Appendix 2 Evaluative Terms

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.