Educational Oversight Review

IT Professional Training Ltd

5 November 2024

Head of Establishment	Mr Nash Syed
Review Date(s)	13 and 14 November 2023
Provider Nominee	Mr Nash Syed
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1. Background

Education Scotland's HM Inspectors of Education are responsible for providing educational oversight of provision up to and including Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 8 offered by private colleges or English language schools in Scotland. These organisations are referred to as 'providers' and are either (a) existing, or are seeking to become, a Student Sponsor on behalf of Home Office UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI), or (b) delivering provision supported by funding from the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). This review was undertaken as part of the SAAS provider designation arrangements. Further information about how HM Inspectors undertake educational oversight reviews is available here.

The review took place during the week beginning 13th November 2023. During the review the team engaged with learners; observed learning and teaching; and engaged in professional dialogue with managers and staff.

This report outlines the findings from the visit, and includes aspects of positive practice, aspects for improvement, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the provider and SAAS and will be published on Education Scotland's website.

2. The organisation and its context

In carrying out the educational oversight review of IT Professional Training Limited (ITPT), Education Scotland HM Inspectors took the following context into account.

ITPT is an established information technology (IT) training company based in Edinburgh and Glasgow, founded in 2013. ITPT is a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) approved centre and offers professional development awards (PDAs) and a range of Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) in IT programmes. ITPT also offers a range of courses at SCQF levels 4-8. It is an approved vendor qualification testing centre and offers vendor-based qualifications and assessments. Currently, ITPT has 176 learners enrolled who are funded by SAAS.

Since the inspection was carried out, ITPT has relocated to new premises in Edinburgh.

2.   Outcomes of external review

The review team assigned the following grades for each of the three key themes:

Key theme	Grade awarded
Learner Outcomes and impact	Weak
Service delivery	Satisfactory
Leadership and quality culture	Weak

3.   Summary of key findings

Learner outcomes and impact

How well are learners progressing and achieving high quality outcomes?

Areas of positive practice

- ITPT offers a relevant range of PDAs and HNC/Ds in IT subjects. These are appropriate to industry requirements and enable successful learners to progress to employment or further study.

- ITPT staff collaborate well with a small number of employers to support learners who achieve appropriate vendor qualifications to enter relevant employment opportunities.

Areas for development

- Record keeping and learner data collection and management lack clarity and are not sufficiently systematic. Staff were unable to provide sufficiently robust data to support accurate analysis of learner retention and attainment or associated trends over time.

- It was not possible to accurately determine the rate of successful completion for full-time SAAS funded learners on the HND programme. However, some data is available for associated vendor qualifications such as CISCO.

- Data regarding part-time learners is not sufficiently clear. Records provided by staff indicate that the overall rate of learner non-completion for part-time learners is high. This data also indicates that almost all learners did not attain their full award. Data showing individual unit attainment is not available for any learner.

- Data provided by managers confirms that rates of successful completion for part-time learners studying awards are low. Too many learners do not complete their award successfully, or complete with only partial success.

How well does provision meet the needs of stakeholders?

Areas of positive practice

- Staff make appropriate arrangements to accommodate the religious and cultural needs of their learners. Learners whose first language is not English and who have no formal qualifications, are supported well to access SCQF level 7 programmes through engagement in a ten-week online course to develop their language skills prior to the start of their programme.

- Learners have good access to assistive technology, including language specific keyboards, to support them in their studies.

- A comprehensive safeguarding policy takes good account of the protection of learners during online activity. All staff have undergone PREVENT training. However, PREVENT is not yet promoted consistently throughout the curriculum or to learners.

Areas for development

- Learners do not have access to arrangements to track and reflect on their own progress. As a result, learners are not sufficiently aware of the learning outcomes they have completed and what they still need to do to achieve their full award.

Service Delivery

How good is delivery of learning and teaching?

Areas of positive practice

- Learners benefit from access to a good range of learning materials, including CISCO resources, and most learners are confident in navigating and using course materials.

- All lessons are recorded and made easily accessible to learners through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and Microsoft Teams. Lessons can be accessed out with class time, allowing learners to revisit class activities if they were unable to attend in person.

- Relationships between staff and learners are positive and mutually respectful. Teaching staff are enthusiastic and committed. They are suitably qualified in their vocational subject area and support learners well to navigate learning materials and develop technical skills.

- A few teaching staff make effective use of screen sharing to provide demonstrations that supplement and enhance the learning experience.

- Staff use SQA's online assessment resource (SOLAR) effectively and make good use of a bank of appropriate alternative assessments when SOLAR assessments are not available.

- Learners with additional needs are supported well and staff make appropriate adjustments to assessments when required. Teaching staff work collaboratively to share approaches to assist learners, especially those with additional support needs.

- Well-planned induction arrangements ensure all new learners are aware of ITPT policies and requirements of their course. The information is made available on the VLE to enable learners to access it as required.

- Staff engage regularly in informal discussions to review programme delivery and assessment methods. However, the outcomes of these discussions are not captured formally to inform actions for improvement.

Areas for development

- Most lessons are overly instructor-led and staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for learner interaction or engagement in collaborative learning.

How good is management of the delivery of learning and teaching?

Areas of positive practice

- Teaching staff take care to ensure that modes of access to lessons take good account of learner circumstances and preferences. Learners are able to learn through face-to-face, blended or hybrid delivery which enables them to learn in a way that meets their individual needs.

- Appropriate internal verification arrangements are in place to ensure the validity and reliability of assessment decisions.

- Staff ensure that meta skills are signposted well to learners within programmes.

Area for development

- Teaching staff do not differentiate their teaching approaches sufficiently to support to meet the needs of all learners, especially those who may require extra support with lesson content.

- Staff do not make sufficient use of questioning techniques or learner discussion to check understanding and support learners to make progress in their learning. This inhibits learner engagement and interaction in the learning experience.

- The HNC Computing and Cyber Security teaching team do not have a consistent understanding of, or approach to, assessment of the graded unit element of the HNC framework. As a result, learners are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to achieve.

Leadership and quality culture

How good is strategic leadership?

Areas of positive practice

- Staff ensure that learners have good informal opportunities to provide feedback on their learning experience. When issues are raised, managers engage in discussions with staff to address them.

- All staff engage well in quality assurance arrangements to support compliance with SQA external verification requirements.

- Managers ensure new staff are made aware of ITPT policies and processes during their induction.

Areas for development

- Managers do not systematically collect, analyse and retain data on learner recruitment, attendance, retention, attainment and progression. This is preventing staff from utilising data to accurately monitor learner progress and attainment, reflect on individual learner performance, and identify actions to improve learner progress and outcomes.

- Arrangements for evaluation of the quality of provision, learning and teaching and delivery of support services are underdeveloped. As a result, managers do not comprehensively analyse the effectiveness of programmes and services to inform action planning for improvement.

- Arrangements to support reflection on learning and teaching are underdeveloped. Staff do not have sufficient access to professional learning to support and enhance their teaching practice.

- Approaches to the collection and use of learner feedback are overly informal. As a result, feedback is not used systematically to inform and improve outcomes for learners.

4.   Main Points for Action

- Managers should develop and implement effective arrangements to capture, record, monitor and report on learner recruitment, retention, attainment, and progression.

- Managers should ensure that data on learner retention, attainment, progress and outcomes is available to staff and used effectively to plan for improvement.

- Managers and staff should reflect on their approach to the delivery of all qualifications to identify actions to improve rates of learner attainment.

- Managers should ensure that staff have sufficient opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice and can access appropriate professional learning to develop and enhance their teaching skills.

5.   What happens next?

Whilst HM Inspectors recognise some strengths in the delivery of provision, there are a number of important areas for improvement that are diminishing the learner experience and impacting negatively on learner progress and outcomes. We will return to carry out a further review of the provider within six months of the publication of this report.

Barbara Nelson
HM Inspector