

IOEx Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Mark Care, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

IOEx Limited was established in 2023 by its parent company, the Chartered Institute of Export and International Trade (CIEIT). IOEx is based in Peterborough and provides apprenticeship qualifications predominantly for businesses in international trade. IOEx is a specialist in international freight forwarding apprenticeships. More recently, it has introduced apprenticeships for team leader, operations manager and supply chain warehouse operative to meet employer demand.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 13 apprentices studying level 3 international freight forwarding and fewer than five studying level 3 team leader and level 5 operations manager. Most apprentices are young adults aged 18 and over who are in the early stages of their career. Most learning for apprentices is online.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Significant progress

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum in response to a skills gap in export and international trade. Leaders use insights from their parent company, the CIEIT, to develop a relevant curriculum. Apprentices learn from a curriculum which is developed and taught by industry experts.

Leaders have thoughtfully structured an apprenticeship for freight forwarding specialists. The curriculum builds in complexity over time, starting with the basics of logistics. Apprentices learn 'the 7 Rs of logistics': right place, right time, right number and right commodity. They then study regulations, industry insights, and the complexities of customs and excise legislation.

Leaders effectively match the aspirations of apprentices with employers and their training needs. Employers understand well the responsibilities and commitment needed for apprentices to be successful. Employers allow apprentices the time they

need for off-the-job training. Employers contribute to review meetings with apprentices. Apprentices know how well they are developing in their roles. The proportion of apprentices who remain on their course is very high.

Leaders have created a very effective culture of continuous improvement for their courses. Leaders check the quality of education by visiting lessons and checking learning records. Leaders know well the strengths and areas for development of their apprenticeship provision. Leaders know what their coaches do well and have put in place impactful training to help them improve further. Coaches improve their teaching because of this approach.

Leaders use external governance effectively to support the strategic direction of the organisation. Governors have experience and knowledge of the international trade sector and apprenticeships. Governors and leaders update curriculums to meet employers' broader needs. Leaders now offer apprenticeships in management and for warehousing operatives.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?	Significant progress
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Coaches use assessments to identify apprentices' starting points accurately. Leaders and coaches adapt the curriculum based on what apprentices know and what they can do. Apprentices complete core knowledge in freight forwarding. They then specialise in the air, ocean, or road freight pathway.

Coaches assess apprentices' English and mathematics skills appropriately. Coaches use this to plan a curriculum based on apprentices' specific needs, for example providing weekly individual help to improve apprentices' mathematics skills. Coaches help apprentices prepare for examinations effectively by using practice exam questions. Apprentices learn quickly and grow in confidence from this approach.

Coaches are highly experienced logistics professionals. They use a range of teaching methods, providing clear explanations of key concepts and checking apprentices' understanding thoroughly. Apprentices know the different types of customs valuations. These include the deducted and computed valuation methods. Apprentices develop their technical language appropriately. Coaches take care to correct any misconceptions in apprentices' learning.

Employers recognise the highly positive impact that the training has on their apprentices. Apprentices rapidly develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They quickly grow in confidence and carry out tasks at work with increasing autonomy. For example, they apply what they learn about hazardous goods when shipping adhesives.

Apprentices benefit from the learning and support they receive from coaches. Coaches provide apprentices with useful feedback so they know how to improve their work. Apprentices quickly become fluent in their subjects. Apprentices understand the use of 'IncoTerms', which define the responsibilities of sellers and buyers for the sale of goods in international transactions. Apprentices consistently produce work of a suitable standard.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders have developed a positive safeguarding culture. Leaders have implemented effective policies and procedures to safeguard apprentices. Leaders ensure that staff are qualified and trained in safeguarding. Leaders use safer recruitment practices to ensure staff are suitable for their roles.

Leaders have developed thorough measures to safeguard young apprentices. Employers are visited before apprentices start their course. Staff meet with employers and young apprentices to ensure workplace environments are safe. Apprentices have a sound knowledge of safeguarding and know what to do if they have a concern.

Leaders have not yet developed strategies to ensure apprentices are aware of local safeguarding risks where they live and work.

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