



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

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OFSTED TO INSPECT LEVEL 6 AND 7 APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROVISION FROM 1 APRIL 2021

As you are aware, it is a priority for the Department to ensure that quality is embedded at the heart of apprenticeships. This has been a key focus of our reforms, driving up the quality of apprenticeships in order to ensure that they better meet the skills needs of employers.

It is essential that we maintain momentum so that every apprenticeship provides the high-quality work-based training necessary to meet the needs of employers and support individuals to progress in their careers. This is more important than ever if we are to maximise the potential of apprenticeships, including higher and degree-level apprenticeships, in supporting economic recovery from COVID-19.

I am clear that every apprentice and employer deserves a quality experience from their apprenticeship training provider. It is therefore vital that there is a consistent approach to quality assurance across apprenticeships.

To enable this, following careful consideration the Department has decided to accept the Augar Review's recommendation that Ofsted become the single body for the inspection of apprenticeship training at all levels.

This change will ensure consistency and parity in quality standards across apprenticeships, so that employers and apprentices can have confidence that apprenticeship training is subject to a consistent and rigorous approach to quality assurance, regardless of provider type or the level of the apprenticeship.

Therefore, I am writing to inform you that from 1 April 2021, Ofsted will become the single body responsible for the inspection of apprenticeship training provision at all levels. This includes responsibility for provision at levels 6 and 7 (both degree and non-degree), in addition to Ofsted's existing responsibilities at

levels 2 to 5. In the case of apprenticeship providers delivering higher education as part of an apprenticeship standard, the Office for Students will continue to provide Ofsted with relevant information to inform inspection judgements.

Under this change, the Education and Skills Funding Agency will continue to regulate all apprenticeship providers via its management of providers on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. The ESFA will use information provided by Ofsted to manage providers on RoATP, intervening to suspend starts or remove a provider from RoATP where necessary, as set out in [existing policy](#). The OfS will continue to regulate higher education and will consider whether the outcome of an Ofsted inspection raises any wider concerns about quality.

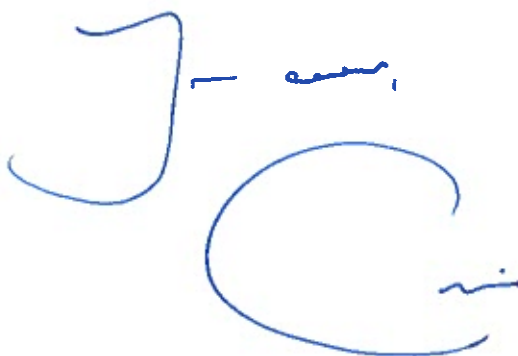
Apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7 are an important part of our education and skills system, supporting productivity and social mobility. They provide people of all backgrounds with a choice of high-value vocational training alongside traditional academic routes and support individuals to pursue fulfilling careers. It is important that this change is implemented effectively in a way that supports the continued growth of these important apprenticeships.

I therefore expect Ofsted to build, where necessary, capacity and capability for taking on this new responsibility. This should include the recruitment of additional inspectors with suitable expertise including knowledge and experience of higher education, in addition to the upskilling of Ofsted's existing inspector workforce where this is required.

Ofsted should also work closely with my officials and the Office for Students in preparing the apprenticeships sector for this change, particularly (although not limited to) those providers who are not already familiar with Ofsted inspection.

I expect Ofsted to work collaboratively to ensure that the circumstances of the sector are fully understood. Ofsted should consider whether any further action is required ahead of taking on this responsibility, such as reviewing its further education and skills inspection handbook.

I am copying this letter to Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of the Office for Students.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Williamson', with a large, stylized flourish below it.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education