

YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY

Summary

York St John University is a large HE institution that has been developing its Apprenticeship offer over the last few years following the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and the increase in level 5 to 7 Apprenticeships available to employers.

The University was seeking assurance that the systems and process it had implemented would meet, and allow it to adhere to, the apprenticeship funding rules specified by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). These rules are complex and subject to regular change, and non-compliance could lead to recovery of funds by the ESFA.

Partnering with RSM

RSM were commissioned by York St John University to review its Apprenticeship provision as they knew we had a track record of delivering such assurances, both for the ESFA directly and for other clients. In addition, the University's Manager responsible for their Apprenticeship provision specifically asked for our Apprenticeship funding specialist, Karl Bentley, to undertake the work. They had seen Karl delivering an Apprenticeship Audit workshop where he had demonstrated a clear and detailed understanding of the funding and data requirements. RSM has delivered funding and related reviews for the past 20 years on behalf of both the FE funding bodies and directly for clients. Our funding assurance reviews for the ESFA cover both existing providers and those who have been newly appointed to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.

As one of the few audit firms under contract to the ESFA, as well as being the University's incumbent internal auditor, the University was confident it would get support and advice from an organisation that was relevant, up to date and in tune with the ESFA's current thinking.

Results

Our approach, mirroring that of the ESFA's prescribed funding audit approach, enabled us to identify where the University's systems and processes could be enhanced. We were also able to quantify the level of funds 'at risk' and offer advice on solutions that would help the University to ensure it was compliant with the funding rules both for the current year and going forwards.



“Having decided as an Institution to strategically grow our apprenticeship provision, it was vital to check that our end-to-end apprenticeship back-office functionality was fit for purpose and appropriately future proved to comply with ESFA funding regulations. Alongside this exercise our cross-university capability needed to be fully tested to ensure that our operating systems and processes could cope with our long-term growth plans. Having commissioned RSM to undertake the Apprenticeship Audits we were delighted to have Karl Bentley assigned as our Project Manager. Karl provides an exceptionally high level of professionalism and industry knowledge, this coupled with his exceptional work ethic and attention to detail has given the university two very high-quality reports. I would question whether both these audits would have been achieved within the available timeframe, to this standard, without having access to the knowledge and expertise that Karl provided to us. His invaluable experience and insights have enabled a more robust and scalable provision to be crafted that will keep the apprenticeship portfolio at YSJU growing for years to come.”

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