**Company Background by Azmat Mohammed BA (Hons) Business & Management**

1. We started trading as the Business School in 2014 but the apprenticeship delivery did not begin until 2016.
2. We switched our delivery to apprenticeships due to interest and demand from the recruitment sector.
3. We were a sub-contract of West Suffolk College from 7th March 2016 to date and a subcontractor of East Sussex College Group (formally Sussex Coast College Hastings) from 31st July 2017 to date.
4. We currently have 142 non subcontracted learners.
5. Working with 112 employers
6. We are supporting 4 sectors (Recruitment, HR, Management, Marketing)
7. We are forecasting 58.3% retention for 18/19
8. We are forecasting 49 completion for 18/19
9. We were admitted to RoATP on 13th March 2017 our first learners started in June 2017.
10. Jane Simpson started in October 18 and has helped us make huge strides forward.
11. We have invested in StudyCourse, our learner system that allows more effective MI and tracking.
12. We have learnt a lot and we are now feeling confident that we have made good progress.
13. We would like more starts to improve retention this academic year but want controlled growth with only 25% from the recruitment sector.
14. We want employers to spend more time developing programs before we start to show real engagement and commitment.

The BIOR Business School was created to deliver recruitment apprenticeships in 2016 on behalf of The British Institute of Recruiters, a move primarily based on customer interest and demand. We felt we could build a high-quality programme based on our sector knowledge and experience.

At the same time, the trailblazer group working on the recruitment and resourcing apprenticeship standards was in regular contact with The British Institute of Recruiters. The ‘Professional Recognition and Progression’ sections of those standards list full membership of The British Institute of Recruiters. The British Institute of Recruiters is also developing courses around improved Business English & Maths, as well as certain skills mastery to further support those completing apprenticeships and wanting to progress in thier work life.

The BIOR Business School is on a journey to build a reputation of high quality and high impact provision. Our passion, drive and resilience will support our efforts as we drive the business school forward.

The Business School was set up with a very small team on a steep learning curve. We involved industry experts (ex ESFA staff and endorsed staff from grade 1 providers) to work full time in the business manage the provision and operations, as well as external consultants to help create the programs advise.

We started delivering recruitment framework apprenticeships in June 2017 with a small cohort which we removed from program after we realised the employer was not fully dedicated to the process and was instead becoming a hindrance to progression of apprentices.

Once the Recruitment and Resourcer Apprenticeship Standards went live on 20th Dec 17 we began delivery in early 2018. In those 20 months we all have been a steep learning curve and made many improvements. Our focus is on our evolution, impact of improvements on results and feedback.

Problems we confronted in terms of retention were based on the recruitment sector being a high-pressure sales environment with high staff turnover and sometimes unrealistic expectations from employers. As a solution we talked to employers and created a private course to put new starts on before allowing them to go on an apprenticeship if the company was not committed to a 12-month programme. This has helped educate employers in understanding that other forms of training are better if a 12-15 month commitment is not something they can be sure of.

The business has suffered a high turnover of staff as we have high expectations and the right skill sets. It has proven a challenge for us, but we now have an excellent team that is fully committed with the right skills and attitude. Towards helping us achieve our mission, vision and values. We are investing in staff CPD. We offer the opportunity to gain a teaching qualification and CPD, as well as supporting the sharing of best practice and knowledge.

**Lessons Learned**

* **Hiring Tutors:** The Skills to deliver Frameworks are not the same as Standards.Sector professionals experienced in the delivery frameworks are not necessarily suited to delivering Apprenticeship Standards. The skill sets are very different. We need to be much better and identifying tutors with the right skills and attitude. It’s a huge challenge finding people that share your passion to work hard and develop knowledge throughout their career. We need dedicated professionals who want to be the best they can be. CPD must be part of their DNA. We must always be ready to hire great people with sector knowledge and passion if we want to grow the right way.
* **Improved delivery and support of Functional Skills:** We have changed our FS team and those staff have much closer links to the FS AO and ownership of processes. FS data to the SMT and governance is also improving. We have hired a customer service officer to ensure learners and employers are kept up to date with progress and feedback any issues via helpdesk tickets with response SLAs.
* **You need an organisation structure that helps you succeed:** We have made many changes to staff and processes in the last 14 months to ensure we are moving forward to a structure and team that can deliver success.

**Improvements have been made in:**
Processes for hiring better Management, Tutors & staff in all areas
Tutor development & support
Teaching Observations, feedback, CPD, impact measurement to improve
Caseload progress tracking
Learner Feedback on sessions/support calls
Employer awareness and commitment
Employer engagement in curriculum design
Employer feedback/customer service calls – hired new dedicated member of staff
Course content improved by subject experts (staff & consultants)
Recruitment and induction of apprentices
Skills scans and IAG processes
Initial Assessments, Diagnostics, using results to design additional learning on program
Delivery of FS Master classes
Embedding of FS
Management of FS delivery and quality – dedicated new member of staff
FS progress and claims – dedicated new member of staff
Safeguarding Improvements
Investments in technology
IQA processes, Monitoring of learner Progression & evidence – New structure & new staff
Stakeholder support and customer service
Blended Programme delivery
Governance Improvements
External challenge and support from skilled consultants (Finance & Quality)
Data reporting and management
Destination data and opportunities via professional membership (work in progress)
Learner programme spread – only 25% on recruitment due to staff turnover in the sector
Charity launch
* **Be ready to adapt to change:** Regulations and requirements are fluid, we need to be nimble and adapt at speed.
* **It's about outcomes, not processes:** Outcomes for learners must drive everybody. It’s the only judge of real impact.
* **Learning and sharing must be our way:** We must be a learning organisation that shares best practice and learns as a collective brain.
* **We can't be effective without high quality business intelligence & data:** Regular robust well formatted data must be provided to all our teams so we can clearly understand our position, manage, act, plan & strategise.
* **Skilled governance must be robust and challenging:** Governance must be robust and effective in continuously driving improvements in our provision and outcomes for learners.
* **Good communication will solve lots of issues:** Being good at sharing the right information with the right people will help our staff and all stakeholders have the information they need. We must work harder to share information when it is needed by Stakeholders.

**About me:**

* **Degree** - I hold an hons degree in International Business & Management and studied People Development & Resourcing.
* **Passion** - I have a passion to succeed and can be quite demanding of others.
* **Qual Design** - I led a small group that designed the Skillsfirst (AO) Recruitment, Resourcing & HR qualifications the sit inside the current Recruitment and Resource Apprenticeship Standards
* **Governance** - I sat on the Governance Board of Knowsley Housing Trust group for 7 years. It’s a £70million turnover trust managing 14, 000 homes in and around Knowsley. I also sat on the governance board of a national charity for 3 years.
* **The British Institute of Recruiters** - I founded the British Institute in 2010. It serves 3500 individual members and 450 corporate members ranging from start up to national brands. The words ‘British’ and ‘Institute’ are protected words and the journey to be awarded them by the Secretary of State was challenging.
* **10 Downing Street** - I have led projects directly commissioned by Government departments including 10 Downing Street which I visited twice for a briefing and presenting our work.
* **James Caan** - I have owned and managed a recruitment business with entrepreneur James Caan.

**My Outside Interests:**

* Supporting Manchester United
* Food (eating not cooking)
* Walking

**Azmat Mohammed BA (Hons) Business & Management**