

Inspection of University of Suffolk

Inspection dates:

3–5 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

University of Suffolk is a new university. It previously operated as University Campus Suffolk in partnership with the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex. At the time of inspection, it had 128 apprentices on the level 4 and level 5 nursing associate and healthcare assistant practitioner higher apprenticeships. It delivers in partnership with its local National Health Service (NHS) trusts in Cambridge, Colchester, Ipswich and Great Yarmouth.

University of Suffolk has developed nursing associate and healthcare assistant practitioner foundation degrees in partnership with the healthcare trusts, the former of which is approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. This is integrated into the higher apprenticeship to support apprentices in moving on to the nursing degree apprenticeship.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices value the learning opportunities provided by the university and its NHS trust partners. These opportunities enhance apprentices' personal and professional aspirations effectively.

Apprentices develop good clinical skills. They use their understanding of physiology to discuss patients' symptoms with doctors confidently, for example in discussing how clinical depression shows itself in a patient's physical health and well-being.

Not enough apprentices receive useful careers advice and guidance. Many are not clear about their next steps in learning. They are often not aware of the breadth of opportunities available to them on completion of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices have a secure understanding of how to keep healthy. They know how to maintain an active lifestyle. Workplace supervisors demonstrate tremendous care about the health and well-being of apprentices. Apprentices actively promote health and well-being to their service users.

No apprentices complete their apprenticeship on time. Managers do not prepare them sufficiently to take their final assessment. Most reach the end of their programme before attempting their final assessment.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have developed a programme that provides a good route into nursing for healthcare staff. However, they have not yet ensured that what apprentices learn on the ward links to the university's taught element. As a result, apprentices often struggle to match the theory that they learn at university to the work they do.

Managers were slow to prepare apprentices for their final assessment. This has meant that no apprentices completed their apprenticeship in a timely manner.

Apprentices benefit from a wide range of learning experiences while on their programme. Apprentices work in many different hospital departments and community settings. They develop a broad understanding of the different aspects of nursing. Workplace mentors ensure that each setting offers challenging learning objectives. These learning objectives link closely to the apprenticeship qualification.

Workplace supervisors provide effective mentoring and coaching to apprentices. As a result, apprentices become skilled communicators with colleagues and service users. They value the support given by their supervisors, which means that they assimilate quickly into the workforce.

Lecturers and workplace supervisors are appropriately qualified and vocationally

experienced. As a result, they teach apprentices relevant and up-to-date clinical practice. Lecturers and workplace supervisors undertake frequent professional development. This ensures that they remain vocationally competent. Staff have extensive and relevant experience of working in the healthcare sector.

Apprentices who have additional learning needs do not receive good support. Too many apprentices do not receive adaptive software until some months into their studies. As a result, these apprentices struggle to produce work of a high standard.

Lecturers do not ensure that apprentices improve their written assignments. Lecturers do not help apprentices understand what they can do to achieve high grades. Lecturers repeatedly write the same comments on apprentices' work. They do not take enough time to explain in detail how apprentices could improve their work. Apprentices repeat the same errors time and again as a result.

Governors do not have good oversight of the apprenticeship programme. They have not challenged senior leaders about why apprentices do not complete on time. Governors have effectively overseen the introduction of the higher apprenticeship. They understand the importance of the provision to the local community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices feel and are safe at their workplace and at the university. They work confidently and safely in a variety of locations, such as operating theatres and gynaecology departments. Apprentices demonstrate safe working practices.

Apprentices demonstrate respect for people of all cultures, abilities and origins throughout. For example, apprentices have a good understanding of those service users with mental health problems. They appreciate that their behaviours and reactions might be unpredictable. They act accordingly to protect themselves, colleagues and service users.

Apprentices receive relevant safeguarding training that is highly relevant to the healthcare environment. They understand very clearly their responsibilities towards their service users and towards themselves.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that managers prepare apprentices for their final assessments in a timely manner.
- Lecturers need to make sure that apprentices link theory closely to clinical practice.
- Managers must make sure that apprentices with additional learning needs quickly receive help with their studies.

- Managers must make sure that apprentices benefit from effective careers advice and guidance. They must make sure that apprentices are clear about their next steps on completing their apprenticeship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	146206
Address	Waterfront Building Neptune Quay Ipswich IP4 1QJ
Contact number	01473 338000
Website	www.uos.ac.uk
CEO	Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor)
Provider type	Higher education institution
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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