

# Inspection of University of Hull

Inspection dates:

19–22 October 2021

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

The University of Hull has held a contract to provide apprenticeships since September 2016. The university works with organisations from a range of sectors, primarily in the health sector, and also including engineering employers, local authorities and the police.

At the time of the inspection, there were 344 apprentices on programmes from level 5 to level 7, all of whom were on standards-based apprenticeships. Of these, 115 apprentices were studying at level 5, of whom 111 were on the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship. There were 166 apprentices studying at level 6, of whom 50 were on the level 6 registered nurse degree apprenticeship, 35 on the level 6 chartered manager degree apprenticeship, and 26 on the supply chain professional (integrated degree) apprenticeship. The remainder were on the operating department practitioner (integrated degree), laboratory scientist (degree), and the social worker (integrated degree) apprenticeships. Sixty-four were studying at level 7, with 42 on the senior leader degree apprenticeship and the remainder on the postgraduate engineer and the advanced clinical practitioner (integrated degree) apprenticeships.

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

Most apprentices are well motivated and positive about their studies. They recognise how their skills and confidence in the workplace have improved. Apprentices display positive attitudes in lectures and practical sessions and are keen to learn and ask questions to develop their understanding.

Leaders ensure that apprentices have access to the wide range of academic resources available at the main campus of the university. The training environments are equipped with relevant technology to facilitate learning. For example, apprentices can access the Brynmor Jones Library, which has a range of academic resources.

Most apprentices develop appropriate professional behaviours from an early stage in their apprenticeship. These include high levels of confidence and resilience that are required to work effectively in stressful work settings. Many enjoy well-structured practical sessions where they can explore and develop their knowledge and skills and demonstrate the behaviours that are expected in the workplace. For example, a learning review and professional development module support apprentices in supply chain to develop professional behaviours related to industry quickly.

Too few apprentices receive adequate careers advice to support further learning or training opportunities. Appropriate arrangements are in place for careers advice, but limited resource means that this guidance is not routinely provided to all apprentices. Consequently, too few apprentices are aware of possible career routes.

Apprentices receive guidance on life in modern Britain, including themes such as tolerance and democracy, during their induction. This guidance also covers relevant topics such as equality and diversity, preventing radicalisation, and health and safety. However, apprentices' knowledge of these topics is not sufficiently reinforced during the programme. As a result, apprentices' understanding is superficial.

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

Leaders manage the quality of apprenticeships within individual faculties of the university, alongside the wider range of university courses provided. As a result, there is insufficient strategic and operational oversight of the quality of the apprenticeship programme to inform improvements. This results in inconsistency in the quality of apprenticeships and in apprentices' experience.

Managers do not have a cohesive strategy to provide a comprehensive programme of professional development to support the understanding of staff who are responsible for delivering apprenticeships. The university has a clear strategy and infrastructure for continuing professional development to support the teaching skills of lecturers and research students. However, managers and delivery teams do not have sufficient understanding of apprenticeships, or of the skills required to deliver these effectively.

Managers and lecturers do not communicate clearly enough to apprentices the requirements of the apprenticeship and the end-point assessment. As a result, apprentices and employers often have an insufficiently clear understanding of the commitment required to complete the programme. Too often, apprentices struggle to complete work which is of high quality or in a timely manner.

Lecturers do not routinely use the identified starting points of apprentices correctly to inform apprentices' learning plans. As a result, too many apprentices repeat learning and do not make progress as swiftly as they should.

Current arrangements for governance are not rigorous enough. Governance arrangements provide some academic challenge about the quality of education. However, this is internal challenge between faculties, and there is no oversight to ensure that this challenge is impartial and thorough. Managers do not routinely address actions discussed at governance meetings. As a result, suggestions for improving the apprenticeship programmes are sometimes not added to the quality improvement plan or implemented.

In too many instances, programme directors do not plan carefully enough the assessment components of the levels 6 and level 7 apprenticeship programmes, alongside the degree components. This means that too many apprentices repeat vocational and academic learning. For example, on the level 6 chartered manager apprenticeship, there is often duplication of assignment work to achieve written work requirements.

Work portfolio tutors do not consistently or effectively coordinate tripartite reviews with apprentices and employers to inform them of apprentices' progress. As a result, too often, apprentices and their employers are not aware of the progress that apprentices are making towards their end goal.

In a minority of cases, staff do not identify rapidly enough apprentices who have fallen behind. This means that they do not put appropriate support in place to enable these apprentices to catch up quickly. For example, on the level 5 healthcare practitioner programme, apprentices returning from breaks in learning were not supported well enough or reassessed to check their understanding. As a result, these apprentices felt unsupported and were unsure about the expectations of them.

Managers have carried out appropriate due diligence to assure the teaching of subcontracted functional skills courses in English and mathematics. However, they are yet to implement a process to monitor the quality of teaching on these courses. As a result, they cannot be assured that the quality of English and mathematics teaching is of an appropriate standard.

Leaders are proactive in engaging with partner organisations to ensure that the apprenticeships meet local, regional, and national needs. In health, for example, leaders are represented on a number of regional boards, including the role of education adviser on a workforce board, which forms part of the seven integrated care systems across the region.

Staff support apprentices to develop their character and resilience. They recognise that apprentices have to balance work commitments with completing assignments and home life. They provide them with useful training about time management, encouraging them to break tasks down into manageable chunks and to keep a to-do list. Apprentices have developed resilience to continue to progress, especially during the pandemic.

Most lecturers provide apprentices with useful feedback that helps them improve their critical thinking and analytical skills. Most apprentices are able to apply this feedback in the context of their academic and workplace practice. However, too few apprentices receive feedback that helps them to identify specifically what they need to do to improve the quality of their work on the apprenticeship.

Apprentices work well independently and with their peers. They take advantage of the off-the-job learning protected time in the workplace to seek out additional learning. For example, apprentices used this time to visit a pharmacy and learned how pharmacists prescribe medication, and about packaging and control. However, a few employers are not routinely involved in the planning and sequencing of the curriculum and do not effectively plan workplace activity to complement off-the-job training.

Staff select and sequence academic modules logically so that apprentices build on their prior knowledge. For example, level 5 nursing associate apprentices begin with academic writing and the fundamentals of practical skills, such as learning about how a body functions under normal circumstances. They then move on to learning about the impact on the body of different medical conditions. Most apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours through their apprenticeship.

Managers have effective systems in place to enable apprentices with additional learning needs to receive high-quality academic support swiftly. They provide individualised and specialised individual support through one-to-one and group sessions to target areas of weakness in written work, planning of academic work, and projects. Apprentices benefit from tailored sessions which help them improve their work and confidence over time. For example, apprentices receive support in reflective writing, referencing and grammar so that they can meet academic written work expectations and are not disadvantaged as a result.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices feel safe and are confident that any incidents of abuse or bullying will be dealt with quickly. Apprentices in health-related settings develop a good understanding of why safeguarding and well-being are important in their work roles. However, although they know how to report any concerns that they have about safeguarding issues, few apprentices can recall any opportunities, after their induction, to learn how to improve their own personal safety and well-being or to reinforce what they have previously learned. Consequently, their understanding of these risks is not sufficiently well developed.

Apprentices develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe at work. For example, level 6 social worker apprentices received mental health awareness training from the university during the COVID-19 restrictions, which was complemented by employers providing additional support for apprentices who are potentially lone workers.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Ensure that apprentices and employers have a clear understanding of the commitment required to complete an apprenticeship by clearly communicating the requirements of the apprenticeship and the end-point assessment.
- Ensure that staff effectively use the starting points of apprentices and their existing knowledge and skills to plan learning, in order to remove unnecessary repetition.
- Ensure that tripartite reviews, involving the apprentice, employer mentor and work portfolio tutor, are implemented consistently, so that apprentices' next steps are identified accurately and consistently, and apprentices' progress is carefully monitored.
- Ensure that all apprentices have access to impartial careers advice, so that they are aware of the full range of progression opportunities available to them.
- Ensure that apprentices' understanding of life in modern Britain and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism are continually developed throughout their apprenticeship, so that they can apply this to their daily lives.
- Improve governance arrangements to provide effective oversight of the quality of the provision and apprentices' progress.
- Ensure that there is appropriate oversight of the quality of teaching and learning on subcontracted provision.

## Provider details

|                             |                                                             |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number     | 133824                                                      |
| Address                     | Cottingham Road<br>Hull<br>HU6 7RX                          |
| Contact number              | 01482 346311                                                |
| Website                     | <a href="https://www.hull.ac.uk">https://www.hull.ac.uk</a> |
| Principal/CEO               | Professor Susan Lea                                         |
| Provider type               | University                                                  |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected                                    |
| Main subcontractor          | HYA Training Limited                                        |

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of apprenticeships and skills, 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 visiting 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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