

Edge Hill University

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Edge Hill University is located on a 160-acre campus in Lancashire, close to Liverpool and Manchester. It has almost 10,000 full-time students and another 3,000 part-time students on a wide range of undergraduate programmes. There are approximately 5,000 full- and part-time postgraduate students.

At the time of the monitoring visit, Edge Hill University had 188 apprentices. All apprentices follow apprenticeship standards, with 103 on the level 5 nursing associate standard, 55 on the level 6 registered nurse standard and 19 on the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner standard. There were an additional 11 apprentices on the chartered manager standard. Leaders have decided not to continue with the chartered manager apprenticeship and to focus on nursing-related standards only.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Significant progress

University leaders have a strong rationale for developing higher level apprenticeships. For example, they designed the nursing curriculum to meet the nationwide need to increase the number of qualified nursing professionals. The university provides social mobility opportunities and helps a broad range of apprentices who might otherwise not have experienced higher education to access graduate roles in their chosen field. Apprentices find their learning experiences and opportunities life-changing.

Leaders demonstrate a very strong commitment to ensuring that their programmes fulfil the requirements of an apprenticeship. They have invested significantly in the development of their apprenticeship provision, for example by employing experienced staff who have full responsibility for the quality of these programmes. Leaders encapsulate all requirements of apprenticeship programmes in their

academic and quality policies and procedures. They apply these successfully in practice.

Leaders recruit apprentices to their apprenticeship programmes with integrity. While most apprentices were employed in roles aligned to health or management previously, they did not have the knowledge, skills and behaviours that went beyond understanding how to perform a process. For example, as healthcare assistants, nursing associates knew how to take blood pressure measurements correctly. However, they did not always understand the implications of the results.

Leaders and tutors link on- and off-the-job learning extremely effectively. They plan this coherently to enable apprentices to apply the new knowledge they learn at the university quickly in their workplaces. Consequently, apprentices swiftly improve the standard of their performance. Employers protect off-the-job training time completely to ensure that apprentices always have access to this learning.

Tutors who teach on the apprenticeship programmes are highly qualified in their fields. As part of their teaching role, they engage in academic research and regularly publish academic papers. In nursing, the majority remain clinical practitioners. This ensures that tutors have up-to-date knowledge and skills, which they relay effectively to their apprentices.

The apprenticeship group committee provides highly effective governance and scrutiny of the apprenticeship provision. Members include pro-vice chancellors, who are fully conversant with the strengths, weaknesses and risks associated with their apprenticeship provision. However, leaders and managers across the university recognise that their self-assessment process is not aligned to established university quality procedures and requires further development.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?

Significant progress

Apprentices gain extensive new knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable them to excel quickly in their job roles. For example, nursing associate apprentices skilfully undertake diagnostic assessments with patients and carefully and knowledgeably administer the appropriate medication. Apprentices on business management programmes apply the new knowledge and skills they gain adeptly to their job roles. Learning about the 'Johari Window' technique helped apprentices to better understand their relationships with colleagues. Consequently, they successfully managed and supported team members through significant organisational change.

Tutors plan and teach the curriculum in a highly sequenced and logical order. Teaching is of a high quality, which is valued by apprentices and employers. Tutors and employers work extremely effectively together to quickly identify any gaps in

apprentices' knowledge and skills and to set clear learning goals. Advanced clinical practitioners benefit significantly from the support they receive from very experienced clinical leads, such as consultants and registrars.

The quality of apprentices' written work is high. Tutors provide apprentices with highly effective and precise written feedback on their academic assignments. Consequently, apprentices understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work.

Tutors carry out thorough assessments of apprentices' existing knowledge and skills at the start of their programmes. They ensure that apprentices have the skills they need to succeed in their chosen career. Apprentices with additional needs such as dyslexia receive effective support, for example through support plans or additional sessions with learning support services.

Nursing apprentices have a very good understanding of the career opportunities available to them within their clinical settings. They benefit from a wide range of placements, including in the four fields of nursing: adults, children, learning disabilities and mental health. As a result, they gain considerable experience of different healthcare professions. This helps them to formulate their career pathways.

Leaders and managers do not develop apprentices' English and mathematical skills sufficiently to develop these skills beyond the requirements of their work. For example, mathematics is linked predominantly to medication calculations and not specifically linked to apprentices' individual development needs.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. They have developed effective relationships with external agencies and other universities to seek additional advice when necessary.

Leaders monitor employers' safeguarding processes regularly to ensure that they effectively support the safety of apprentices at work. Apprentices feel safe in all aspects of their apprenticeship. They know how to report concerns. However, apprentices are not sufficiently aware of the risks or threats from radicalisation and extremism in the localities in which they work.

Apprentices have access to a range of resources, such as counselling services and external support agencies. They can access a variety of support, such as the 24-hour 'Let Us Know Anything' helpline and the 'Together All' online tool that contains tutorials about well-being issues, such as positive psychology and resilience, exam anxiety and mental health.

Leaders check on the suitability of new staff stringently before they start work at the university. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training on induction. However, safeguarding update training, unlike 'Prevent' duty training, is not due to be mandatory until January 2022.

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