

# Inspection of University Centre Quayside Limited

Inspection dates: 7 to 10 December 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

University Centre Quayside Limited (UCQ) offers short, adult learning programmes in essential work skills in logistics, construction, warehousing, engineering and manufacturing, retail, adult social care, and site safety. It also provides chartered manager degree apprenticeships validated by The Open University. The adult learning programmes are offered in the North of Tyne and Tees Valley areas, while the degree apprenticeships are taught online and are available nationally.

At the time of the inspection, 55 adult learners had recently completed their programmes and fewer than five learners remained on programme. There were 149 apprentices, of whom 14 were on a break in learning. All apprentices are aged 19 or over.

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

Learners and apprentices enjoy their programmes and are proud to be part of UCQ. They appreciate the care demonstrated by UCQ's staff, who, for instance, during the pandemic, provided computers to learners who did not have one. Learners who have come back to education after a long break are well supported in their return to learning.

Learners, some of whom face very challenging circumstances, find UCQ welcoming, safe and inclusive. They are treated with the utmost respect by staff and greatly improve their confidence and self-belief as a result. They are well motivated to continue in learning. As a result, they attend well and achieve their goals.

Learners and apprentices benefit from UCQ's strong relationships with regional and national employers. These relationships expand learners' understanding of current working practices and the range of jobs available to them. Apprentices are well prepared for high-level careers in management in a wide variety of sectors.

Learners and apprentices are given the tools and techniques that they need to succeed in their learning. They benefit from the ready availability of high-quality resources at UCQ. Adult learners study in easily accessible community centres and have access to realistic warehouse training environments in Newcastle and Stockton. Apprentices appreciate the wide range of online resources on offer, many of which are tailored to their own situation at work.

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

Leaders and managers work very effectively with regional stakeholders, including the Tees Valley and North of Tyne combined authorities, to ensure that adult provision is aligned well with regional skills needs. They also work well with major employers, such as Santander and the NHS, to provide an apprenticeship curriculum that is tailored to employers' management needs. Commissioners and employers comment very positively on the contribution that UCQ makes to the region and individual businesses.

Senior leaders and governors have developed a culture of high expectations. This is underpinned by effective oversight, systems and curriculum planning that ensure that rigorous academic standards are combined with frequent and effective application of knowledge and skills in the workplace. Staff and leaders support learners and apprentices to develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours that stand them in good stead for their next steps.

Learners and apprentices benefit from a high standard of careers advice that broadens their horizons and develops their confidence. This helps a large proportion to secure new jobs, promotions or increased responsibilities at work.

Leaders and managers provide very effective support for UCQ's well-qualified and experienced teachers and assessors. They ensure that all staff have ample time and resources to develop their subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Staff are engaged in research, committed to their work and invested in their own professional development as a result of this supportive culture. Learners benefit from staff's expertise and contagious enthusiasm, which motivates them to do their best.

Leaders and managers use feedback from employers, commissioners, apprentices, external examiners and learners to improve the curriculum and ensure that it is up to date. For example, they adapted adult learning programmes in warehousing to reflect work processes at large new regional retail warehouses. On apprenticeship provision, managers moved a module on project management to the beginning of the third year to enable apprentices to use key theories and techniques effectively in their final-year projects. Careful curriculum planning ensures that most learners and apprentices make good progress on their courses and are well prepared for work.

Teachers and assessors use effective activities and resources to help learners and apprentices to make good progress. For example, apprentices extend their knowledge about different approaches to people management through discussions with managers in other organisations. Apprentices' new approaches to people management have resulted in increased productivity and staff retention at work. Assessors help apprentices to reflect on what they have learned so that they can apply useful new approaches and techniques to their own workplaces. Employers ensure that apprentices have many opportunities at work to practise and develop the skills and knowledge that they have learned.

Teachers and assessors use assessment and feedback well to help learners and apprentices develop their expertise. For example, teachers on adult learning programmes use regular, low-stake quizzes to help ensure that previous learning is revisited, recalled and embedded in long-term memory. Teachers do not accept work that is unsatisfactory, and they provide useful feedback about key content that learners use when resubmitting work of a higher standard. However, in a few cases, teachers of adult learning programmes do not give helpful feedback about errors in learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar. This means that a few learners who are writing job applications do not improve their English skills as much as they could.

On adult learning programmes, teachers use assessment well to identify learners' starting points. They use this information effectively to plan a curriculum that builds on learners' existing knowledge, skills and experience so that new skills and knowledge can be developed quickly. As a result, almost all adult learners make good progress and achieve the qualifications that they need in order to apply for jobs. Leaders and managers have plans in place to ensure that initial assessment on apprenticeships is equally effective. At present, it is overly reliant on apprentices' self-assessment of their confidence in different areas, which is occasionally inaccurate. In a few cases, this means that apprentices in their first year do not develop new knowledge and skills as quickly as they could.

Leaders, managers and teachers provide a broad and ambitious curriculum that includes helpful components related to equality, diversity, inclusion and democratic values. Through a well-structured induction, teachers introduce learners to important civic and personal considerations. Learners gain a sound understanding of how this new knowledge applies to the jobs to which they aspire. For example, they discuss the democratic implications of requirements for workers in adult social care to be double vaccinated. Learners and apprentices develop a good understanding of the place and function of their employment in a liberal democracy.

Teachers and assessors ensure a respectful atmosphere in classes. Apprentices and learners learn about appropriate professional conventions such as the Chatham House Rule. They feel valued and safe in expressing a range of well-informed opinions. For example, they discuss sensitive topics such as conflict management, in depth and learn from the experiences of their peers. Their freedom of speech is protected well, and they develop useful professional and academic skills.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers provide effective safeguarding training that helps staff keep learners and apprentices safe. They also ensure that employers receive up-to-date and comprehensive safeguarding information that helps them to keep apprentices safe at work.

Staff take appropriate action to mitigate any concerns about the few safeguarding matters that occur, such as in relation to unspent convictions of learners who are ex-offenders.

Learners and apprentices are well informed about key risks, including in relation to radicalisation and extremism, sexual harassment and violence, and online sexual abuse. They know how to keep themselves safe and to whom they should report any concerns.

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

- Accelerate plans to enhance the initial assessment of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviour, and use the results from initial assessments to ensure that all apprentices make as much progress from their starting points as possible.
- Ensure that teachers of adult learning programmes and assessors provide helpful feedback to improve learners' progress in English.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1270865
<b>Address</b>	Quayside i-4 Albion Row Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1LL
<b>Contact number</b>	0191 275 5015
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://ucq.ac.uk">https://ucq.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Nick Mapletoft
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous progress monitoring 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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