

# Inspection of University of Gloucestershire

Inspection dates: 22 to 25 February 2022

<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>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

The University of Gloucestershire is a provider of higher education and training with a long history of teacher training and of supporting the skills needs within the regions it serves. The university offers a wide range of apprenticeships, from level 4 to level 7. Currently, 541 apprentices are enrolled on mostly standards-based apprenticeships. In the health-related subjects, the largest cohorts consist of 110 apprentices registered on the level 5 nursing associate and 88 on the level 6 nursing degree. In social work, there are 57 apprentices studying level 6 social worker and 20 on level 4 children, young people and families practitioner. In business and management, there are 110 apprentices studying level 7 senior leader and 35 on level 6 chartered manager apprenticeships. There are other, smaller apprenticeship cohorts in the digital (cyber), manufacturing, financial services and academic professional areas.

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

Apprentices attend well and display positive and professional behaviour both within the workplace and at university. Apprentices are highly motivated and routinely follow up on any missed lectures and tutorials. As a result, most apprentices develop significant new knowledge and skills.

Apprentices enjoy their taught sessions with tutors and have a positive attitude to their learning. They work to overcome barriers to their learning, such as low academic aspirations because of poor experiences of education, and aim to make progress and achieve.

Staff provide a wide range of support services for apprentices. Apprentices are well supported both academically and pastorally.

As a result of regular discussions about culture, equality and diversity during their progress reviews and sessions, apprentices develop a strong understanding of respecting difference within their professional and personal working lives.

Apprentices feel safe while on their programmes because of the induction and ongoing support from tutors. Apprentices understand how to keep themselves safe and most are aware of local and regional threats.

Leaders and managers provide apprentices with a wide range of careers advice and guidance information. However, coaches do not ensure that apprentices have sufficient understanding of opportunities outside their immediate employment or job role.

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

Leaders have well-established and effective links with local and regional agencies, such as the local enterprise partnership and local authorities. They work with them productively to ensure that the university helps to contribute to meeting regional skills needs in areas such as health, business and cybersecurity. As a result, they have co-designed a focused curriculum with employers that enables apprentices to develop the professional skills, knowledge and behaviours to help them achieve their career ambitions and meet their employers' needs.

Managers and course leaders have designed and sequenced a curriculum that allows apprentices to develop skills linked to the environment in which they work. In cybersecurity, managers have recently introduced an additional module on malware analysis to enhance apprentices' effectiveness at work. However, in the chartered manager apprenticeship, course leaders do not suitably link modules, such as marketing, to apprentices' job roles. Consequently, these apprentices do not always understand the relevance of the topic to their workplace.

Although apprentices make good progress in their studies, teachers and coaches do not always use information on apprentices' starting points to ensure that they can achieve their potential. However, teachers on the academic professional course use this information thoughtfully. They know very well apprentices' knowledge and skills gaps and ensure that these apprentices receive the teaching and support for them to flourish.

Apprentices benefit from engaging in in-person and online teaching sessions. Teachers encourage apprentices to debate and discuss new ideas and problems, often linking relevant theories to apprentices' respective workplaces. Teachers use questioning imaginatively, pausing and posing apprentices' questions to others, and so drawing out their deeper comprehension of concepts and ideas. However, in a few sessions, for example in cybersecurity, during presentations teachers do not give apprentices sufficient opportunity to clarify and consolidate their understanding.

Most lecturers and coaches provide apprentices with effective spoken and written feedback, helping them to understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, too few apprentices on nursing associate and cybersecurity courses receive sufficiently helpful feedback. Too often, the feedback focuses solely on weaknesses, resulting in these apprentices becoming demotivated and slowing their progress.

In the majority of cases, coaches and workplace mentors conduct progress reviews routinely with apprentices. These reviews help apprentices to make strong links between teaching and the workplace. However, in cybersecurity and in health, employers do not routinely engage in reviews. Consequently, these apprentices fail to receive helpful and timely work-related feedback on their performance, reducing the opportunity to provide remedial action if an apprentice falls behind.

Although lecturers assess apprentices' English and mathematical skills at the beginning of their course, lecturers and coaches do not use this information effectively to plan learning so that apprentices close identified gaps in their knowledge.

For the few apprentices who need to achieve level 2 English and mathematics qualifications, managers do not monitor well enough apprentices' progress in these subjects. They do not ensure that these apprentices make sufficient progress early in their apprenticeship, reducing their ability to access higher level and more complex information. Leaders do not ensure that apprentices continue to study and close individual skills gaps in these subjects beyond level 2.

Coaches ensure that apprentices with an identified learning need receive the appropriate support. For example, management apprentices with dyslexia access the lecturer recordings so they can listen to the session. As a result, these apprentices make progress in line with that of their peers.

Leaders use a wide variety of information, including apprentices' and employers' views, to evaluate the quality of their provision effectively. Leaders monitor closely

the effectiveness of teachers' sessions. They ensure that teachers reflect on their practice and provide them with training to improve the quality of their sessions, so that apprentices make at least the progress expected of them.

Leaders have ensured that the governing council has members with the right skills and expertise to oversee and evaluate leaders' actions effectively. Council members receive appropriate information to ensure that they hold leaders broadly to account. However, leaders accept that council members need more specific information about apprentices' progress and achievements, so that they can question leaders thoroughly about whether apprentices make the progress that they should.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding and health and safety seriously. They have appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that apprentices are safe. For example, they ensure that apprentices understand the threats from extremist, hate-based and self-harm groups, and know about risks such as phishing when working online.

Leaders update routinely and ensure that their safer recruitment policy identifies the appropriate measures for staff working with apprentices in areas such as health, teaching and social work.

Leaders ensure that staff receive adequate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, teachers and tutors help most apprentices to develop a sufficient understanding of the threats from extremist activity. Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe.

Apprentices develop safe working practices thoroughly. For example, apprentices on cybersecurity courses learn how to operate information technology systems safely and securely, monitoring carefully potential risks from external threats.

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

- Leaders must ensure that lecturers and coaches use information on apprentices' starting points thoroughly to ensure that apprentices make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices on nursing associate and cybersecurity courses receive sufficiently helpful and constructive feedback so that they know clearly what they need, and feel able, to do to improve.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices who need to achieve level 2 English or mathematics qualifications receive support to study and complete these subjects early on in their apprenticeship. They must also ensure that all apprentices continue to develop these skills beyond level 2.

- Leaders must ensure that the governing council receives sufficiently helpful information to ensure that its members know apprentices' progress and achievements well enough so they can hold leaders to account fully.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133818
<b>Address</b>	The Park The Park Campus Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL50 2RH
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<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.glos.ac.uk">www.glos.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Stephen Marston (Vice-Chancellor)
<b>Provider type</b>	Higher education institution
<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 director of apprenticeships, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit 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

Richard Deane, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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