

University of Huddersfield

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.

University of Huddersfield has been training apprentices since 2018. Around 500 apprenticeships are offered in two schools within the university. The School of Human and Health Sciences is where most of the apprentices are based, and Huddersfield Business School (HBS) has around 60 apprentices. The largest programme is the level 5 nursing associate (TNA) with 266 apprentices. At level 6, the university teaches apprentices on the paramedic, operating department practitioner, registered nurse, podiatrist, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and the chartered manager degree apprenticeships. At level 7, there are just under 100 apprentices following the advanced clinical practitioner and senior leader apprenticeships.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders have ensured that oversight of the quality of apprenticeships is thoroughly embedded in the university's governance and management structures, resulting in effective quality assurance and improvement arrangements. Consequently, managers are held to account well to meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers place a high priority on offering apprenticeships that meet the needs of local and regional employers. Managers have developed a level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship in response to a shortage of nurses. This programme very successfully helps local employers such as National Health Service trusts, general practice and private healthcare providers to recruit and train staff to fill vacant posts.

Leaders and managers have recruited well-qualified staff with the clinical experience and knowledge to teach and manage the nursing associate programme. Lecturers are experienced in all the four fields of nursing, which enables them to support apprentices to develop the knowledge and skills that they need to work in a wide

range of clinical settings. The staff that teach on apprenticeships in HBS are also very well qualified, and they engage in research and scholarly activity to keep their knowledge current.

Managers structure the programmes so that apprentices get their full entitlement to high-quality off-the-job training. On the chartered manager degree apprenticeship (CMDA), apprentices benefit from attending specialist lectures one day each week and complete assessments that apply management theory to their workplace. The nursing associates receive protected time in which they practise their clinical skills in a range of settings. Staff ensure that apprentices who need clinical time in an area outside their own work area are able to access suitable placements.

The useful induction to the university that staff provide to new apprentices helps them to understand the wider facilities and support that they have access to as an apprentice. All apprentices have access to the university library and receive regular communication from university staff about how to access independent careers advice.

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

Lecturers ensure that TNA apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours to enhance patient care. These apprentices take on more complex caseloads of patients and, as a result, become more autonomous practitioners. Apprentices who have worked as healthcare support workers prior to becoming an apprentice extend their knowledge and skills well from their starting points.

Teaching staff develop TNA apprentices' academic writing skills very effectively. This is particularly important for those who have been out of education for some time. Initially, apprentices are taught to develop their skills in producing bibliographies and academic referencing, and then staff support them to produce literature reviews. A few TNA apprentices produce literature reviews of such a high standard that staff have plans to encourage publication.

On the CMDA, lecturers identify apprentices' starting points as managers at the beginning of their programme. Apprentices reflect on their progress as they complete work for the degree, such as the need to practise leading meetings and making effective presentations. As a result, they are able to complete these tasks more competently. Apprentices increase their confidence and many gain promoted posts.

Lecturers provide very helpful feedback to apprentices about the quality of the work that they produce and what they need to do to improve. For example, when CMDA apprentices complete work about recruitment, they may consider how they fill vacancies in their own part of their organisation but, with guidance, they are able to

analyse the more strategic aspects of workforce planning. Apprentices produce work of a very high standard.

Staff ensure that employers have an accurate understanding of the progress that apprentices are making. They conduct regular meetings, which include the employers, to help apprentices understand what they need to do to improve. For a few CMDA apprentices nearing the end of the course, the final review meetings are too late to help them to prepare fully to complete their programme.

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

The designated safeguarding officer and the school-based safeguarding champions are well trained in a variety of safeguarding topics. Training content includes dealing with bullying and harassment, mental health first aid, county lines and working with victims of domestic abuse.

The university has a range of support services to promote well-being and address welfare concerns. The safeguarding champions frequently send apprentices information about these services.

Apprentices receive training and information at the start of their apprenticeship about safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty, and health and safety. However, apprentices cannot remember the content of the training or why it is important.

Leaders have revised university recruitment processes to ensure that safe recruitment practices are implemented in both schools that offer apprenticeships. Staff in each school produce an appropriate safeguarding assessment and action plan to ensure that the safeguarding of apprentices is a high priority.

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