

Inspection of University of Hertfordshire

Inspection dates:

4 to 7 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

The University of Hertfordshire began providing directly funded apprenticeship provision in April 2018. At the time of the inspection, there were 696 apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships from level 5 to level 7, most of which were on degree apprenticeships. Apprentices are aged over 18 years old, and most work within Hertfordshire. Apprentices are on the following programmes: 215 apprentices are on the Senior Leader level 7 apprenticeship, 142 are on Nursing Associate Level 5, 111 are on Chartered Manager level 6, 72 are on Registered Nurse level 6, 53 are on Occupational therapist level 6, 36 are on Digital and Technology Solutions Professional level 6, 26 are on Embedded Electronic Systems Design and Development Engineer level 6, 23 are on Healthcare Science Practitioner level 6, and 18 are on Construction Site Management level 6. There are no apprentices with high needs and the university does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Apprentices are highly motivated to learn and succeed in their careers. Apprentices always demonstrate the professional behaviours expected of them within the learning environment and their places of work. Apprentices on the level 5 Nursing Associate apprenticeship consistently put patients first and demonstrate their care and compassion when working with patients. Apprentices on level 6 Digital and Technology Solutions Professional use their newly gained skills to find solutions and improve productivity within their businesses.

Apprentices learn and work within inclusive environments that are conducive to their ongoing development. They benefit from the support they receive from skilled, expert tutors, and from the high expectations of staff at the university and in their workplaces. Apprentices value the discussions that take place in frequent reviews with their academic staff and employers.

Apprentices benefit from high-quality physical and digital resources. Apprentices use industry standard resources to master the techniques that they use in the workplace. Simulation rooms and virtual reality, for example, enable apprentices to perform nasogastric tube insertion and venepuncture safely. Apprentices use the learning resource centre and online resources frequently to help them with assignment writing and to improve their higher-level academic skills.

Apprentices' new knowledge and skills are valued by their employers. The timely help that most apprentices receive from their workplace mentors helps them to manage their workplace pressures. Most apprentices gain additional responsibilities at work. Apprentices on the level 6 Construction Site Management apprenticeship quickly gain line management responsibilities.

Apprentices feel, and are, safe. They know how to keep themselves safe within their learning environment, at work and when working online. They know how to report any concerns that they might have within both settings. Apprentices have frequent opportunities to revisit topics associated with well-being and safety, which ensures that they secure their understanding of a breadth of safeguarding matters.

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

Leaders have put in place a highly relevant curriculum. Leaders work closely with a range of stakeholders, including large employers such as the NHS, TUI and Vauxhall, and the local enterprise partnership, to identify priority workforce needs. The apprenticeship offer helps to raise participation in higher education and to increase the volume of staff within the local workforce qualified to degree level. The range of healthcare apprenticeships provided enables employers to fill the shortage of biomedical scientists and specialists in genomics for medical diagnostics, and to bridge the gap between healthcare assistants and registered nurses.

Leaders ensure that the content of apprenticeships caters to the specific needs of the employers with whom they work. The level 6 digital and technical solutions apprenticeship helps to fill specific skills shortages in networking, data analysis and cyber security. Apprentices on the level 6 construction site management complete additional units to support off-site methods of construction and to develop interpersonal skills in response to employer requests.

Staff rigorously check apprentices' existing skills and knowledge to ensure that apprentices are on the correct level, and duration, of course. Staff establish apprentices' existing English and mathematics skills effectively. Tutors help apprentices for whom English is a second language to improve their grammar and punctuation. Apprentices understand the importance of English and mathematics. Tutors help apprentices to improve these skills in order to work to a high standard. Apprentices on the level 6 Occupational Therapist apprenticeship understand how to communicate with service users with different needs. Apprentices help them to redesign aspects of their home to meet their specific needs, using scale drawings and budgeting skills.

Apprentices gain a sound understanding of the application of theory to their workplace. On the level 7 Senior Leader apprenticeship, tutors ensure that apprentices gain an understanding of external governance and stakeholder management. This enables apprentices to hone their own leadership skills and influence the culture in which they lead. Apprentices on level 6 Healthcare Science Practitioner build on learning about cells and microbiology to progress on to pathology and the diagnosis of disease.

Tutors use a range of appropriate assessment strategies to ensure that apprentices retain knowledge and skills. Tutors provide helpful and detailed feedback to apprentices. Apprentices know what they do well and what they need to do to improve. As a result, apprentices improve their standards of work overtime to meet the high academic standard expected of them.

Apprentices benefit from groupwork to promote discussion and help them explore different views. Apprentices on the level 5 Nursing Associate discuss the different health care components that lead to holistic and person-centred nursing approaches. Apprentices understand the different social and economic influences on the quality-of-care patients receive.

Apprentices with barriers to learning, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress. Tutors identify any potential barriers promptly. Tutors adapt their teaching and the resources used to meet the individual, identified needs of their apprentices. Learning support, welfare and academic staff work together effectively in order to support apprentices.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices on the four-year level 7 Senior Leader apprenticeship achieve their apprenticeship by their expected end date. Too many apprentices fail to complete their learning. Most apprentices on other

apprenticeships achieve within planned timeframes. A high proportion of apprentices on qualifications with graded outcomes gain high grades of merit or distinction.

Most tutors do not provide a curriculum that helps apprentices develop their skills and knowledge beyond the academic and technical training associated with the apprenticeship. Very few apprentices attend the vast range of enrichment opportunities available at the university, including clubs and societies, guest speakers and lecturers. Staff do not use the curriculum to promote wider learning to apprentices, such as how to keep physically and mentally healthy or to nurture apprentices' other interests and talents.

Staff do not provide impartial careers advice and guidance to apprentices. Most apprentices do not gain an understanding of the breadth of career opportunities available to them. Too few apprentices access the careers service available at the university. However, most apprentices are well-prepared for their next stage of education or training, and for the career paths available at their current employer. They have a good understanding of the professional bodies that they can join.

Leaders quality assurance of apprenticeship education and training is insufficient. Leaders do not monitor apprentices' progress in learning, their destinations, or apprentices' attendance and punctuality in learning and work. Consequently, leaders cannot identify apprentices at risk of falling behind in their learning or intervene swiftly. Leaders have recently strengthened their oversight of apprenticeships with new leadership posts, reporting systems and governance structure. However, these changes are recently introduced and have not yet made sufficient impact.

Governance arrangements are not yet fully effective. Leaders report to governors on key performance measures, such as achievements and recruitment forecasts, but do not report on the quality of teaching and assessment, or on apprentices' progress. Governors are aware of the overall strengths and areas for development in apprenticeship provision as identified in leaders' self-assessment report. Governors use performance data to challenge leaders where poor outcomes are identified. Governors have not yet made sufficient impact on ensuring that improvements are made swiftly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers responsible for safeguarding have excellent partnerships with a range of organisations, local authorities and other relevant groups to ensure that their safeguarding intelligence is up to date. They work closely with representatives from local counter terrorism teams. They attend a range of briefings and safeguarding groups to identify wider risks, such as the threats posed by 'incel' ideology. They also work with national security teams and the police to identify local concerns, such as county lines activity. Managers share their insights directly with staff across the university through frequent update training, and with apprentices through guest speakers and informative newsletters.

However, leaders do not monitor or identify specific safeguarding matters affecting apprentices. Their safeguarding policies lack sufficient reference to apprentices, and to the role of employers in an apprentices' safeguarding and well-being.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Governors and leaders must swiftly improve their oversight of apprenticeships, including the quality of education and training, apprentices' attendance, punctuality, progress in learning and destinations. Governors must use this information to hold leaders to account and ensure swift improvements are made.
- Leaders and managers must rapidly increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve within planned timescales on the level 7 senior leader apprenticeship.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that staff plan for and provide a broader, curriculum for apprentices that enables them to develop knowledge and skills beyond the academic and vocational aspects of their apprenticeship.
- Leaders, managers and staff must ensure that apprentices receive ongoing, impartial careers advice and guidance so that they are fully informed of the breadth of opportunities available to them in the long term when they complete their apprenticeship.
- Staff responsible for safeguarding must ensure that they monitor and report on matters related specifically to apprentices' well-being and safeguarding in order to ensure that apprentices receive the support they need to remain in learning and achieve.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133783
Address	Hatfield Campus College Lane Hatfield Hertfordshire AL10 9AB
Contact number	01707 284000
Website	www.herts.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Quintin McKellar
Provider type	FE in HE
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Associate Director Academic Quality Assurance, 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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