

University of Chichester

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision funded 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.

The University of Chichester (the University) is based in West Sussex, with campuses in Chichester and Bognor Regis. Teaching of apprenticeships began in 2016, alongside established undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Only the apprenticeships were in scope for this monitoring visit.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 354 apprentices in training at the University. There were 299 apprentices enrolled on standards-based degree apprenticeships at level 6. Of these, 98 apprentices were on social worker, 61 on manufacturing engineer, 46 on chartered manager, 40 on electrical technical support engineer, 34 on software engineer and 20 on digital marketer apprenticeships. There were also 41 apprentices studying the level 7 senior leader standard. There were 14 apprentices on the recently launched level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship. Most apprentices were aged over 19 years old. There were no apprentices with high needs.

The university works with one subcontractor, Havant and South Downs College, who provide functional skills qualifications for the small number of apprentices who need to achieve them as part of their apprenticeship.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have a clear understanding of local skills priorities, which they use well to design their apprenticeship offer. For example, they have recently introduced a nursing associate apprenticeship to fill skills gaps in a local NHS trust. Leaders use their well-resourced facilities and staff expertise well to meet the needs of employers in the region.

Leaders ensure that courses meet the requirements of apprenticeships successfully. They have put in place suitable arrangements for end point assessments and work

closely with employers to create apprentices' learning plans. Most employers participate well in purposeful progress reviews. Staff ensure apprentices get helpful, well-planned off-the-job training time which enables them to complete their studies successfully. They work effectively with employers to ensure apprentices can apply their learning and practise their new skills in the workplace.

Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum which enables apprentices to achieve sector endorsed qualifications such as the undergraduate degree recognised by Social Work England, or a foundation degree recognised by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. As a result, apprentices gain professional status which is critical to their careers successfully.

Leaders understand the strengths and weakness of their apprenticeship provision well. Where they identify weaknesses, leaders take adequate action to resolve them. For example, when they identified challenges with apprentices being co-taught with full-time business students, they moved to teaching in apprenticeship groups, which apprentices welcome. Leaders recognise they have not acted swiftly enough to improve the quality of functional skills delivery provided by their subcontractor. They have taken steps to improve this aspect of work, but it is too early to see the impact of this activity.

Leaders have appointed an experienced link governor and established a clear committee structure which provides them with appropriate oversight of the quality of apprenticeships. However, they have not acted swiftly enough to remedy aspects they rightly identify as weakness, such as the uptake of end point assessments on a small number of apprenticeships, and timely completion of functional skills. As a result, progress in these areas is too slow.

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

Leaders and managers have planned the curriculum logically. As a result, apprentices build new knowledge, skills and behaviours swiftly which they apply skilfully in the workplace. For example, chartered management apprentices use their learning about SWAT analysis to improve their project planning at work. Social work apprentices can now apply learning on disability when speaking to parents of children with special educational needs.

Staff check what apprentices know and can do prior to starting their apprenticeship thoroughly. They use this information to tailor apprentices' learning plans effectively. For example, where they identify relevant prior knowledge and experience, they reduce the length of programme to ensure apprentices do not repeat learning unnecessarily.

Lecturers ensure that apprentices continue to develop literacy, numeracy and digital skills appropriately. Nursing associates practise numeracy skills through practical applications, such as working out safe doses of medication. Mechanical engineering apprentices can calculate the speed of acceleration in simulated rocket launches as a result of their training.

Apprentices benefit from well-planned teaching sessions which engage their interest well. Lecturers enable apprentices to make effective links between theory and workplace practice. For example, nursing associate apprentices learning about blood pressure drop, understand this could be an indicator of kidney failure. Management apprentices can recall times they have seen different styles of persuasion used for positive impact confidently.

Apprentices, many of whom are mature learners or are returning after a break in learning, gain confidence rapidly and make good progress in developing their academic skills. Most apprentices pass their apprenticeship with high grades and achieve good degrees.

Leaders and managers do not track progress appropriately for the small number of apprentices who need to achieve functional skills qualifications. Some staff carrying out progress reviews are not aware of which apprentices should be working towards functional skills qualifications. As a result, too few apprentices who need these qualifications make good and rapid progress in this area of their apprenticeship.

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

Leaders have implemented a strong culture of safeguarding in the university. They have a high focus on apprentices' well-being. Staff identify apprentices at risk of harm appropriately. They refer them in a timely way to those with expertise to help. Leaders provide extensive support, including counsellors, nursing staff, temporary accommodation and mental health advisory services. They have appointed a sexual violence and misconduct officer, recognising the importance of focusing on helping learners stay safe from sexual harassment and violence.

Leaders ensure staff they recruit are safe to work with apprentices. All staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty for higher education. Staff carry out appropriate health and safety checks on new settings to confirm workplaces provide a safe environment for apprentices.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to raise concerns. They benefit from training and support which meets their needs well. For example, social work apprentices who face emotionally challenging situations receive training to help them build resilience. Engineering apprentices have a strong focus on health and safety in the workplace.

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