

Inspection of University of Huddersfield

Inspection dates:

10 to 13 October 2023

Overall effectiveness**Outstanding**

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

The University of Huddersfield provides apprenticeships at levels 5, 6 and 7 across the Yorkshire and Humber region. The vast majority of apprenticeships are in the healthcare sector, with a few programmes in the field of business. There are currently 651 apprentices, including 179 studying the level 5 nursing associate programme, 92 studying the level 6 paramedic programme and 109 studying the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner (integrated degree) programme. The university works with one subcontractor, Luminate Education Group, to provide courses leading to functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics, which is currently for fewer than five apprentices.

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

Apprentices thrive on their programmes due to the consistently strong quality of education throughout the provision. They rapidly develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours which they use to benefit their workplaces. For example, podiatrist apprentices become able to run their own clinics independently, which means that more appointments are available for service users.

Apprentices have very positive attitudes to their learning, are highly motivated and attend consistently well. They are committed to their studies and demonstrate this by, for example, routinely completing additional reading and setting up peer study groups to consolidate their learning. They demonstrate a professional approach to their work and strive to meet the high standards set by their employers and the teaching staff.

Across all programmes, apprentices are encouraged to be respectful and active citizens. Apprentices gain a secure understanding of fundamental British values, relevant to their work and lives. For example, they can identify the signs of radicalisation when carrying out home visits to service users. They understand the valuable role that they play in serving the needs of a diverse community and when working with the most vulnerable people in society.

Apprentices benefit from a well-rounded curriculum which is carefully planned to provide broad learning experiences. These include key parts of the university's 'global professional award' programme with modules on resilience, employability and career success. Advanced clinical practitioner apprentices organise 'restart a heart' resuscitation awareness events in the community and provide medical support for mountain rescue services.

Through being part of the university community, apprentices have access to a wide range of activities and services. These include an on-site gym, social action projects and a variety of student-run societies. A comprehensive well-being service supports apprentices with a range of personal concerns, underpinned by a strong culture of safeguarding. Teaching staff are mindful of apprentices' workload, enabling them to maintain a positive balance between study, work and life.

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

Leaders of the apprenticeship programme and university senior leaders prioritise and integrate their apprenticeship provision into the university community. They value the role that their apprenticeship programmes play in providing opportunities for people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds to access higher education opportunities and in retaining talent in the local region.

Leaders provide apprenticeships which respond precisely to key skills needs in healthcare and business leadership. They have ensured that the growth of the apprenticeship provision has been sustainable and steady, based on demand and

need. Leaders have a deep understanding of apprenticeships and ensure that all aspects of the provision are tailored specifically to meet the needs of apprentices and their employers.

Leaders and managers develop strong and sustained relationships with employers. They work collaboratively with them to understand the needs of their sector and to adapt and modify the design of the curriculum. Employers appreciate leaders' high expectations and, specifically on healthcare programmes, the imperative to have high standards for patient safety and to preserve public confidence.

Leaders create a culture of continuous evaluation and improvement to benefit apprentices. They use a wide range of effective methods to assure themselves of the quality of the provision, including peer observations, module evaluations and standardisation processes. They strongly encourage apprentices to express their views and evaluate their training, and they welcome and act on the feedback that they receive.

Leaders of the apprenticeship programme and university senior leaders have thorough oversight of their apprenticeship provision and understand its strengths and areas for development very well. They have established a range of boards and groups which provide scrutiny and challenge to leaders, and discussions are open and honest. This leads to clear actions which are implemented quickly to benefit apprentices.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on the quality of teaching and provide a wide range of opportunities for teaching staff to develop their craft. This includes a 'network of teaching excellence', teaching and learning conferences and a monthly 'learning bytes' newsletter with a technology focus. Staff attend frequent workshops at which recent topics have included authentic assessment, artificial intelligence and effective marking.

Highly expert teaching staff keep their subject knowledge up to date, integrating their own research at the leading edge of their sector into their practice. Many of the teaching staff in healthcare continue to practise in emergency departments and primary care facilities. For example, paramedic apprentices benefit from learning the realities of working on ambulances from teaching staff who continue to work for ambulance services.

Leaders manage the workload of teaching staff effectively using a 'workload framework' which helps to balance the demands of the role and provide transparency within curriculum teams. New members of staff are supported well, especially those with limited previous experience of higher education or apprenticeships. Leaders actively encourage ambition in their teaching staff through, for example, providing workshops on applying for internal promotions and discussing career aspirations in appraisal meetings.

Teaching staff plan an ambitious curriculum using their contemporary understanding of the sector. They carefully plan and sequence their teaching. For example,

advanced clinical practitioner apprentices learn the fundamentals of the respiratory system before moving on to ventilation, artificial respiration and caring for patients who are intubated. Teaching staff collaborate with employers when planning teaching and ensure that their programmes meet the requirements of professional bodies such as the Royal College of Nursing. Apprentices swiftly and securely develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours throughout their programmes.

Teaching staff ensure that the curriculum is consistently inclusive and provide tailored interventions to meet apprentices' specific needs. They work seamlessly with the university's disability support team to implement individual support plans. They make well-considered adaptations to teaching and assessment practice to ensure that all apprentices are able to participate fully.

Across all programmes, teaching staff use a range of highly effective teaching strategies to help apprentices embed new knowledge and skills. They recap and revisit theory and practice frequently and encourage apprentices to reflect through discussion with peers and in presentations. Apprentices deepen their knowledge and confidence to work effectively with professionals in their workplace.

Teaching staff carefully craft assessments to reflect both the academic demands of the programmes and the realities of the workplace. For example, nursing associate apprentices carry out simulated clinical assessments. Teaching staff provide valuable feedback which helps apprentices to understand their progress and focus their learning. Apprentices produce work of a consistently high standard.

Teaching staff embed many opportunities in the curriculum for apprentices to develop their English and mathematics skills. For example, occupational therapist apprentices calculate the costs of adaptations in the homes of service users, with consideration for energy efficiency and the life expectancy of lifting equipment. Physiotherapy apprentices develop their English skills to improve clarity in medical notes and referral letters, and when communicating with service users.

Teaching staff support apprentices to develop their academic skills very well, particularly when apprentices lack these skills at the start of their programmes. The additional support from the university academic support tutors is highly valued. However, the demand for this service on a few programmes is often higher than its availability.

Leaders have engaged Luminate Education Group as a subcontractor for the few apprentices who need to achieve English and mathematics qualifications. They chose this subcontractor carefully and have rigorous measures in place to monitor the provision. Apprentices benefit from frequent assessments and make sustained progress, enabling them to be ready for their examinations.

Apprentices make rapid, sustained and secure progress on their programmes, and are prepared very well for their end-point assessments. The vast majority stay to the end of the programme and achieve their apprenticeships, with a high proportion

gaining distinctions at end-point assessment and upper-second and first-class honours grades in their degrees.

Apprentices are well prepared for their careers following their apprenticeships. They learn about different roles and specialisms through their programmes and have access to the breadth of the university careers services. Apprentices often gain promotion or enhanced roles during or following their programmes, and a high proportion go on to secure fellowships or memberships of professional bodies such as the Royal College of Nursing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133822
Address	Lockside Queensgate Huddersfield HD1 3DH
Contact number	01484 422288
Website	www.hud.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Professor Bob Cryan
Provider type	Higher education institution
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Luminate Education Group

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 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

Karen Anderson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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