

# Inspection of City University

Inspection dates:

10 to 13 October 2023

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

**Information about this provider**

City, University of London is located in the London Borough of Islington and has approximately 20,000 students on a range of mostly degree courses. This inspection is only of the university's apprenticeships. At the time of inspection, the university had about 40 apprentices on the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship and about 30 apprentices on the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner (ACP) apprenticeship. The two senior leader apprenticeship pathways had around 150 apprentices, and the data technology solutions technician apprenticeship had around 30 apprentices. Since the new provider monitoring visit in July 2021, the university has temporarily stopped offering the solicitor apprenticeship programme.

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

Apprentices are taught in a calm and professional environment by staff who are passionate about their subjects. Staff are experts in their fields, and they continue to research and publish in their subjects or maintain their clinical skills. They use their experience in their teaching to give apprentices relevant, up-to-date knowledge and skills. While most staff teach in large mixed classes of students and apprentices, they all know their apprentices well and make sure that the subject content is relevant.

Apprentices benefit significantly from attending lessons alongside other university students. They consistently show high levels of respect towards staff, each other and the multiple groups of other students with whom they come into contact. They recognise and value the different backgrounds that students come from and enjoy learning from their experiences.

Lecturers use effective strategies so that apprentices learn and retain new knowledge. For example, in data science sessions, they use questioning strategies effectively to help apprentices consolidate their learning. ACP lecturers present new and complex information clearly to apprentices, frequently referring back to prior learning about key medical conditions. They make sure that apprentices have a good command of technical language in order to, for example, explain the causes of heart and valve disease and failures.

Apprentices enjoy their training. However, a minority of apprentices do not always find the teaching sessions consistently engaging. Occasionally, nursing associate tutors do not check apprentices' understanding well enough, and they do not set tasks for apprentices that are challenging enough.

Apprentices have access to a comprehensive range of academic, welfare and leisure services. While apprentices form a small proportion of the university's overall student population, leaders and managers have ensured that support workshops and drop-in sessions are held on days when apprentices attend.

Apprentices receive good support to prepare them for their final assessments. Staff have high expectations for their apprentices and ensure they understand the potential grades for their end-point assessment (EPA). Staff do this through termly EPA tutorials to focus on the requirements and expectations. As a result, the majority of apprentices achieve their qualifications. A high proportion of apprentices gain high grades in their final assessments, and pass rates across all apprenticeships are consistently high.

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

Leaders and managers have designed a challenging curriculum to meet the needs of sectors facing significant skills shortages. They have successfully collaborated with a range of employers through their employer boards. This has helped them to

instigate the cyber-security course in response to employer demand. In healthcare, a local NHS trust has recognised the changing needs of the population and is working closely with the university to co-create a specific mental health pathway within the advanced practitioner course. As a result, apprentices receive training that offers good opportunities for career progression.

Leaders and managers make sure that the course content and modules are taught in a logical order and allow apprentices to develop their knowledge in a structured way. For example, apprentices on the nursing associate apprenticeship learn basic skills, such as taking vital signs, including blood pressure and heart rate measurements, in the first couple of weeks of the course. They then go on to learn about each body system. Apprentices on the senior leadership apprenticeship for healthcare professionals start by learning about different leadership behaviours through the use of actors. This helps participants to develop an understanding of how their behaviour impacts on others.

Employers appreciate the benefits the apprentices bring to the workplace. They cite clear examples of how apprentices use what they have learned to have a positive impact on their team or business. For example, level 7 senior leader apprentices use their newly gained skills to produce brochures to identify different consultancy packages they could offer. These have been presented to 29 GP practices. Nursing associate apprentices develop their clinical skills and quickly become important members of the nursing team.

Lecturers give apprentices detailed feedback on their essays and practical assessments. They pinpoint to apprentices where they can improve their grades in future or pass when deferred. For example, they indicate where apprentices can improve critical analysis and evaluation in their work. Apprentices' work is of a high standard and at the level required for the programme. Apprentices have a thorough understanding and application of their knowledge.

Leaders and managers use a range of mechanisms effectively to monitor the quality of the apprenticeships. This includes a range of scrutiny committees starting at course level through to the Senate and Council. Peer-led observations of the quality of lessons, as well as ongoing surveys, underpin quality improvement at the university. However, actions to improve the quality of teaching following observations are not always systematically planned and monitored. Senior leaders have created an apprenticeship hub, through which they work effectively with academic departments to ensure an efficient delivery of apprenticeships across all schools.

University governors have a good overview of the apprenticeship programme. The various governance committees receive performance reports that allow them to challenge leaders on the development of courses to ensure that they align with the vision and mission of the university.

The vast majority of apprentices start their course with the required level of English and mathematics. For the small number of apprentices who need to complete these

qualifications, there is suitable support and options for them to do so. Most apprentices pass examinations in these subjects at their first attempt. However, a few apprentices have not been sufficiently informed about why they need to complete these qualifications. A few have been frustrated by delays in starting their apprenticeship due to the need to achieve an English or mathematics qualification first.

The majority of apprentices benefit from relevant on-the-job training to complement what they learn at the university. In the nursing associate apprenticeship, the on-the-job training is taught in clinical settings by ward staff, much of which includes shadowing and practising skills. For example, apprentices shadow nurses on medication rounds, and they learn about the link between pathophysiology and prescription. They learn how medications interact with each other and work. Apprentices further on in their course learn through demonstration by colleagues how to set up syringe drives while working in palliative care. However, a minority of doctors and medical consultants on the level 7 senior leadership apprenticeship have limited on-the-job training in leadership to complement their off-the-job training.

Apprentices benefit from frequent progress reviews. In most cases, apprentices' line managers attend these reviews. However, in a minority of instances, tutors set targets for apprentices that are not specific enough and do not focus helpfully enough on the knowledge and skills that apprentices need to develop.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Provide effective support to teachers when they identify a need to improve their practice.
- Provide more opportunities on the senior leadership apprenticeship for apprentices to receive on-the-job training to complement their off-the-job training.
- Ensure that the small number of apprentices who need to complete qualifications in English and mathematics know why they need to complete them, and ensure that they are not delayed in starting their apprenticeship.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133815
<b>Address</b>	Northampton Square London EC1V 0HB
<b>Contact number</b>	02074778000
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.city.ac.uk">https://www.city.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Sir Anthony Finkelstein
<b>Provider type</b>	Higher Education
<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 Head 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

Steve Lambert, lead inspector

Jane Hughes

Sarah Wilding

David Baber

His Majesty's Inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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