

Inspection of University of York

Inspection dates:

15 to 17 November 2023

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

University of York has been offering apprenticeships since 2019. The university works with local NHS providers, including York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, as well as with general practitioner surgeries in the local area. At the time of the inspection, the university had 39 apprentices enrolled on the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship standard, 40 apprentices working towards the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner standard and 23 apprentices on the level 3 team leader apprenticeship standard. All current apprentices are aged 18 or above.

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

Apprentices demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are acutely aware of how the apprenticeship programme will aid them in their career development. They have high levels of engagement and motivation to succeed. Apprentices enjoy their sessions and take part in tasks enthusiastically. Level 7 advanced clinical practitioner apprentices speak confidently, professionally and expertly on how their projects will improve patients' experience and lead to service improvements.

Apprentices benefit from effective careers guidance and support. They are made aware from early in their programme of the different career paths available to them. As a result, apprentices feel ready for the next stage of their careers, including the different specialisms in which they can work. For example, level 3 team leader apprentices are encouraged to take on additional professional development to support them in their career journey, such as recruitment and selection training and activities to enhance their coaching skills.

Apprentices are made aware of opportunities available across the university to develop their interests and skills beyond the apprenticeship programme. This includes activities such as netball and drama clubs. However, only a very small number of apprentices take up these opportunities.

Apprentices benefit from a calm and dedicated learning environment that contributes to enabling them to develop their study skills and theoretical knowledge. They value the protected learning time that their employers provide, which helps with developing the competencies required for success on the programme.

Apprentices feel safe at work and at the university. They have a personal supervisor at the university to meet their pastoral needs and a work supervisor with whom they can discuss any concerns about safeguarding, workload and well-being.

Teaching staff set high academic expectations for apprentices. Most apprentices complete their programmes and progress successfully. Apprentices produce work at the required professional standard and, in many cases, their work is of a high quality. However, a few apprentices do not feel fully prepared for their end-point assessment and feel that they would benefit from additional support for this earlier in the programme to aid their preparation.

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

Staff successfully encourage apprentices to learn from each other and from the work that they carry out in their settings. Apprentices share their experiences from their different environments, which helps them to develop a greater understanding of patient care and how to manage challenging situations. For example, apprentices from care settings are encouraged to share experiences on how their setting would respond to clinical assessment of wound care, and apprentices debate the pros and cons of different approaches. Apprentices value the opportunity to hear from visiting

guest speakers, who provide expert insight into additional subjects such as haematology.

Leaders and managers provide a curriculum that is well planned and improves apprentices' knowledge and skills over time. For example, on the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner standard, they sequence the curriculum well to integrate the development of the required knowledge, skills and behaviours with the NHS Capabilities Framework, setting out clearly what is expected of apprentices at each stage of the programme. At the start of the programme, there is a focus on key attributes of the clinical practitioner role before apprentices move on to developing their clinical practice in the second year. In the final year, apprentices receive less supervision and develop the autonomy that they need in their roles.

Teaching staff provide good support for apprentices to help them complete their programmes. All apprentices have access to academic and pastoral support, and those with additional learning needs receive the support they need. Taught sessions enable apprentices to develop approaches to their practice and enhance their academic research skills. Teaching staff carefully recap learning before apprentices complete assessments. This ensures that apprentices consolidate their learning about new concepts, which enables them to respond safely and autonomously to the needs of patients. Teachers provide helpful resources for apprentices. They provide reading lists and record sessions for apprentices to revisit when required.

Managers on the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner standard provide additional modules on the programme to extend apprentices' learning. These include modules on reading electrocardiogram test results, as well as mental health awareness training. Employers and apprentices find this to be of benefit in the workplace. However, this additional training is not available for all apprentices on the programme.

Staff use assessment well to help apprentices develop and improve their work. In most cases, staff provide helpful developmental feedback on apprentices' work. For example, on the level 5 nursing associate standard, teaching staff signpost apprentices to help with Harvard referencing and highlight how to improve the structure of writing. Apprentices on the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner standard benefit from useful feedback by guest experts on units such as pharmaceuticals on the prescribing module. However, in a few instances, teachers do not ensure that apprentices revisit and resubmit their work to improve their final grades. As a result, a few apprentices are not reaching their full potential.

Leaders and managers have strong governance arrangements within the university's apprenticeship unit. An apprenticeship monitoring board is in place that includes rich representation from university leaders, who provide effective challenge. Members of the apprenticeship monitoring board have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement within the apprenticeship unit and are strong advocates for apprenticeships in the wider university. As a result, quality improvements happen quickly, and there is a culture of investment and support for the apprenticeship programmes.

Leaders manage subcontracted provision well. They have a clear rationale for subcontracting part of their provision. The university currently subcontracts a very small amount of provision for functional skills training and examinations to York Learning. This provision is monitored well through lesson visits, meetings with apprentices and short-notice visits. Apprentices benefit from good support and high-quality teaching on functional skills courses and pass the required examinations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that a much higher proportion of apprentices take up the offer of the wide range of extra-curricular activities available at the university.
- Extend to all apprentices on the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner apprenticeship programme the good practice of including additional modules that employers require.
- Ensure that all apprentices understand the expectations for end-point assessment earlier in the programme to enable them to prepare more effectively.
- Ensure that all teachers support apprentices to resubmit their work, where necessary, to help them to improve their final grades.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133913
Address	Heslington York YO10 5DD
Contact number	01904 430000
Website	https://www.york.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Professor Charlie Jeffery
Provider type	Higher education institution
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	York Learning

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of apprenticeships and inclusive education, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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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His Majesty's Inspector

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