

Inspection of Edge Hill University

Inspection dates: 5 to 8 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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

Edge Hill University is located on a 160-acre campus in Lancashire, close to Liverpool and Manchester. It has approximately 10,000 full-time students and another 549 part-time students on a wide range of undergraduate programmes. There are also approximately 4,000 full- and part-time postgraduate students. These students were out of scope for this inspection.

The university provides apprenticeships from levels 5 to 7. At the time of the inspection, Edge Hill University had 188 apprentices in learning. All apprentices follow apprenticeship standards, with 118 on the nursing associate apprenticeship at level 5, 40 on the registered nurse apprenticeship at level 6 and 30 on the advanced clinical practitioner apprenticeship at level 7. There were fewer than five apprentices studying the chartered manager apprenticeship at level 6. Leaders no longer offer the chartered manager apprenticeship to new apprentices. The university does not subcontract any of its apprenticeship provision.

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

Apprentices share a positive, collegial working environment with peers and staff. They are proud of the work they complete and the new skills that they acquire. Apprentices work productively in groups to share their experiences in different healthcare contexts. They are confident about their improved knowledge, skills and behaviours in dealing with patients, colleagues and leaders in fast-paced clinical environments. However, a few apprentices report that their workload can be overwhelming.

Apprentices learn how to build compassionate and trusting relationships with their patients and maintain professional boundaries in therapeutic sessions. Leaders and staff role-model professional behaviours and standards in their interactions with apprentices. Apprentices routinely demonstrate the caring, professional behaviours expected in their sector. They explain the importance of upholding high standards, effective communication and speaking with clarity, so that patients receive the best care possible from all healthcare professionals.

Most apprentices attend their training sessions regularly. Leaders prioritise attendance and punctuality as key elements of apprentices' readiness for employment. Personal tutors monitor, track and take supportive actions to improve the attendance of those apprentices who miss sessions and are at risk of falling behind. However, employers report that apprentices' non-attendance is not reported to them quickly enough.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to report any concerns that they may have. They complete training on the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices know the signs to look out for and how to make referrals. They explain their daily safety precautions in work, such as the use of personal alarms in secure hospital settings and making equipment checks on neonatal wards. Leaders foster a culture of care and welfare across the faculty.

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

Leaders design ambitious curriculums to meet the needs of employers, apprentices and the wider healthcare and nursing sector. Leaders collaborate effectively with employer partners to meet their recruitment needs and challenges. As a result, healthcare practitioners and staff working in unqualified or non-registered roles have access to apprenticeships in nursing and clinical practice to advance their careers. Apprentices gain the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to be successful in their chosen career pathways.

Lecturers plan and teach their curriculums effectively. They begin with a comprehensive introduction to university processes, study skills and digital literacy. On the nursing associate apprenticeship, lecturers cover the foundation knowledge apprentices need, such as biological systems. They then increase the complexity and move on to simulated learning scenarios. Lecturers integrate practical experiences

well and maintain a focus on professionalism and safety to align with industry standards.

Lecturers use a variety of teaching techniques and high-quality resources to help apprentices remember more. Apprentices benefit from access to a clinical skills and simulation centre. They become familiar with ward-based simulations focusing on critical or deteriorating patients, practise clinical skills, and, in the 'better at home' flat, experience scenarios that mirror what may take place in community settings.

Lecturers plan assessment opportunities effectively to support apprentices to practise and refine their academic and practical skills before moving on to their final assessed work. Apprentices improve the detail, depth and currency of their information and practice.

Lecturers provide precise developmental feedback that helps apprentices to understand what they have done well and what they could improve. They provide a robust focus on academic writing skills, criticality, references and citation. Lecturers readily support apprentices with their research and writing skills. Apprentices produce work of a high standard, meeting the demanding needs of their workplace.

Lecturers prepare apprentices effectively for their final assessments. The overwhelming majority of apprentices achieve their qualifications on the registered nurse degree apprenticeship. They maintain their nursing positions, and some progress to a higher band on completion of their apprenticeship. However, leaders recognise that too many apprentices on the nursing associate and advanced clinical practitioner apprenticeships leave before they complete their apprenticeships. Almost all apprentices who complete their apprenticeship remain in the healthcare sector, with many securing more senior roles.

Lecturers ensure that the curriculums include personal enhancement opportunities for apprentices. Apprentices have access to a diverse range of master classes on topics such as mental health awareness, learning difficulties, deaf awareness and Sign. They develop character, resilience and an understanding of broader equality and inclusion issues linked to their work.

Apprentices benefit from a comprehensive, impartial careers advisory service at the university. They attend drop-in sessions, practise interview skills and use a range of relevant careers resources. Lecturers teach apprentices about different nursing and clinical fields and potential career paths. Nursing associate apprentices receive useful information about how they can progress to top-up degrees in nursing. Registered nurse degree apprentices gain an insight into further career opportunities through varied work placements in NHS trusts, community settings and home-care services. Advanced clinical practitioner apprentices discover progression opportunities to work in different medical contexts. They appreciate that their apprenticeship is an important stepping stone to more senior roles.

Lecturers are well qualified dual professionals. They have extensive industry experience, for example in children's nursing and mental health nursing in the

community and secure hospitals. All lecturers maintain their registrations with their professional medical bodies as current practitioners. Where they do not hold teaching qualifications, leaders prioritise support to ensure that they achieve these.

Lecturers complete higher level study, including Master's degrees and doctorates. They undertake research and share good practice through the university's fellowship scheme. Leaders cultivate a learning culture across the organisation. They promote engagement with research and scholarly activity for lecturers across the apprenticeship programme. As a result, apprentices benefit from high-quality teaching and training.

Leaders are mindful of, and focus on, the welfare and workload of their staff to ensure that they maintain a healthy work-life balance. Staff teams have access to all the support on offer across the university, including access to counselling and mental health practitioners. Leaders facilitate flexible working arrangements to meet lecturers' individual circumstances.

Leaders and those responsible for governance are ambitious and committed to the vision of providing high-quality, specialist provision for apprenticeships in nursing pathways. They ensure that the curriculum offer helps social mobility and provides ambitious career progression routes for apprentices who may not have pursued a career in nursing or accessed higher education.

Those responsible for governance have a close working relationship with operational course leaders. They use well-established university governance committees, structures and systems to maintain an oversight of apprenticeships. Those responsible for governance understand the provision's strengths and weaknesses. However, they do not have sufficiently accurate oversight of the progress that apprentices make during their apprenticeship. Those responsible for governance have an over-reliance on programme leaders for this information.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that all apprentices are aware of the demands and workload of their apprenticeship in advance of beginning the programme.
- Continue to improve attendance and ensure swift reporting of apprentices' non-attendance to their employers.
- Increase the number of apprentices who remain on programme and achieve their apprenticeship on time.
- Ensure that those responsible for governance receive clear, timely information on the progress that apprentices make.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133828
Address	St Helen's Road Ormskirk Lancashire L39 4QP
Contact number	01695 575171
Website	www.edgehill.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Dr John Cater
Provider type	Higher education institution
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of practice and apprenticeships in nursing and midwifery, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit 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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