

# Inspection of University of Essex

Inspection dates: 23 to 26 January 2024

**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 Good

## Information about this provider

The University of Essex (UoE) has campuses in Colchester, Southend and Loughton. Most apprentices are studying health and care standards from levels 5 to 7. At the time of the inspection, there were 387 apprentices. All apprentices were aged 18 or above. There were 104 apprentices studying the registered nurse integrated standard, 104 apprentices studying the assistant practitioner (health) standard, 40 studying the nursing associate standard and 56 studying the psychological wellbeing practitioner standard. The remaining apprentices were studying the advanced clinical practitioner (integrated degree), physiotherapist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, embedded electronic systems design and development engineer (degree) and senior leader standards. At the time of the inspection, UoE did not have any apprentices learning with subcontractors. UoE had no apprentices in receipt of high needs funding.

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

Apprentices highly value their apprenticeship courses. Apprentices have positive attitudes towards their studies. Their rate of attendance at university teaching sessions is high. Registered nurse apprentices are curious and participate enthusiastically in teaching sessions. Physiotherapy apprentices work collaboratively to agree actions when reviewing patient scenarios. They listen to each other's views. They offer each other mutual support.

Apprentices quickly develop the professional behaviours required in the health and social care sector. Apprentices are smartly dressed in clinical areas. They are polite and considerate. They listen carefully and respectfully. They respond using the correct professional language. Assistant practitioner (health) apprentices know the importance of mutual respect. They know how to care for a patient who is unable to communicate their needs and wants. Psychological wellbeing practitioner apprentices know about cultural differences in their local communities. They know how to support patients from a broad range of backgrounds. Physiotherapy and advanced clinical practitioner apprentices are confident to challenge the work of more experienced colleagues respectfully.

Apprentices quickly gain the new knowledge and skills employers need. Physiotherapy apprentices learn how to perform core skills such as auscultation. Working under supervision, these apprentices can assess new patients, even those with complex needs. They create appropriate treatment plans. As a result, apprentices quickly take an active role in their departments.

Apprentices appreciate the support they receive from their lecturers and personal tutors to help them achieve their apprenticeships. Academic staff are helpful. Most respond quickly to apprentices' requests for support. Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support from lectures and specialist staff to meet their needs. They appreciate the useful opportunity to revisit recordings of lectures to consolidate their learning. They develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours in line with their peers.

Apprentices feel safe at the university and in their workplaces. They know how to report any concerns. Registered nurse apprentices value the training they receive about preventing and managing violence and aggression within the workplace. As a result, registered nurse apprentices know how to work safely in different environments, such as patients' homes. A few apprentices are not aware of the local safeguarding risks in their local communities.

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

Leaders, managers and academic teaching staff are highly ambitious for their apprentices. Leaders have invested in high-quality specialist resources. Registered nurse apprentices practise key interventions, such as catheterisation, in high-quality clinical simulation rooms. As a result, apprentices build confidence in handling

equipment prior to using this on live patients. Staff work in partnership with employers, mostly from the NHS, to design and teach their apprenticeships. As a result, apprentices benefit from the most up-to-date content. Leaders have designed comprehensive progression routes. The two year, plus two year level 5 to 6 model agreed with employers means apprentices who complete the level 5 assistant practitioner (health) standard move on to the level 6 registered nurse, occupational therapy or speech and language therapy apprenticeships seamlessly.

Leaders and managers have ensured that apprentices' courses are suitably ordered to build knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. Advanced clinical practitioner apprentices first learn about literature review and data collection. This supports apprentices to undertake their quality improvement projects later in the course. Registered nurse apprentices first learn about person-centred care. Apprentices then learn about broader aspects of professional practice. They learn about supervising the learning of others in clinical practice. As a result, apprentices develop a holistic view of the role of the nurse in society.

Most lecturers are extremely well qualified and experienced. Many teaching on the health and social care apprenticeships have substantial relevant clinical experience. They use this knowledge highly effectively to give relevant examples. These examples enhance their teaching sessions. Lecturers of physiotherapy use their professional experience skilfully to support apprentices to understand the challenges in gaining credible evidence bases when investigating respiratory care. As a result, apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be successful in their future careers. Most apprentices achieve their apprenticeships. Many of those who complete achieve merit and distinction grades.

Most Lecturers use a variety of teaching techniques, such as the use of case studies, scenario-based tasks, presentations and demonstrations of practical tasks, effectively to help apprentices understand and remember new concepts. Occupational therapy apprentices learn how to handle different types of equipment, such as hoists and different types of chairs, correctly. They learn how to help patients into and out of beds correctly. Apprentices practise using these skills in different settings in the university, such as in a purpose-built flat, a hospital ward and adapted classrooms. They then practise using the same equipment in their workplaces. On the assistant practitioner (health) standard, lecturers undertake effective recap activities. Apprentices work in groups to draw diagrams to demonstrate their recollection of anatomy and physiology. As a result, apprentices remember these theoretical concepts.

Most lecturers use assessment successfully to check that apprentices know and understand taught content. Lecturers on the advanced clinical practitioner standard assess apprentices' varied starting points thoroughly. They use this information to ensure that courses are tailored to meet the individual needs of apprentices. Lecturers on the registered nursing course use questioning and group activities skilfully. During group work and lectures, apprentices draw on and use their experiences from their workplaces in areas such as wound care. As a result,

lecturers check apprentices' understanding of taught concepts such as appropriate care of wounds and clarify any points.

Staff provide constructive formative feedback to apprentices. Consequently, apprentices know what they need to do to improve their academic writing style and the quality of their work. Occupational therapy apprentices receive feedback on their use of academic and professional practice models. This helps apprentices to understand how the use of these models demonstrates greater critical evaluation. As a result, apprentices know what they need to do to improve their work. The quality of their academic work improves over time.

Progress reviews on the registered nursing standard are not consistently used by lecturers to coordinate and plan the on- and off-the-job learning for apprentices effectively. Goals that lecturers set for apprentices often do not link closely with the current module content. As a result, lecturers do not ensure that apprentices practise applying the new concepts and skills they learn in a timely way.

Leaders and managers have ensured that apprentices receive a thorough career development programme. Advanced clinical practitioner apprentices attend forums where specialist practitioners describe their career journeys. As a result, apprentices understand the wide range of different career pathways available to them on completion of their apprenticeships. Assistant practitioner (health) apprentices understand which specialist pathways they will pursue at level 6.

Leaders ensure that they actively seek and listen to their apprentices and the employers they work with. Leaders act on this feedback to make continual improvements to the quality of their provision. This ensures that they meet the needs of employers and apprentices. Nursing service user groups contribute to apprenticeship design and development. Employers support clinical teaching sessions. As a result, apprentices benefit from courses that are frequently reviewed and updated. Leaders ensure that they prioritise dealing with concerns raised by apprentices, such as those regarding the quality of teaching on a few topics. Consequently, apprentices believe that leaders listen to them and want to make improvements.

Those responsible for governance provide appropriate challenges to the academic schools and the central apprenticeship hub to improve the quality of their courses. They support leaders to improve courses continually. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They have taken decisive action, where needed, to improve the quality of the training. Leaders decided to close their original senior leader apprenticeship because too few apprentices achieved their apprenticeships. However, leaders have not assured themselves that all apprentices have a positive outcome on completion of their courses.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of progress reviews on the registered nurse standard so that on- and off-the-job training is coordinated effectively.
- Improve the monitoring of individual apprentice's destinations on completion of their apprenticeship so that leaders assure themselves that apprentices have a positive outcome when they finish their courses.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133805
<b>Address</b>	Wivenhoe Park Colchester Essex CO4 3SQ
<b>Contact number</b>	01206873333
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.essex.ac.uk/">https://www.essex.ac.uk/</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Professor Anthony Forster
<b>Provider type</b>	Higher education institution
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 to 8 February 2019
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the senior apprenticeships and summer school manager, 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

Georgina Ager, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Angela Twelvetree	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Minton	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Lou	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Wills	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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