

Inspection of University of Salford

Inspection dates: 20 to 23 February 2024

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	Good

Information about this provider

The University of Salford (the university) is in the city of Salford in the Greater Manchester region of the United Kingdom. The university offers apprenticeships to 1,473 apprentices at levels 4 to 7. Most apprentices study at level 6 in sectors such as health, engineering, construction and policing. The remainder study at levels 4, 5 and 7 in health, construction and senior leadership. All apprentices are aged 18 and over.

The university subcontracts a proportion of the level 6 police constable apprenticeship to Greater Manchester Police and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). At the time of the inspection there were 497 apprentices studying the apprenticeship. Apprentices that apply to Greater Manchester Police are required to successfully complete the national assessment centre process alongside specific Greater Manchester Police and university requirements.

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

Apprentices benefit from a calm and orderly learning environment. They are motivated and committed to their studies. Apprentices value their training and most attend consistently. They demonstrate excellent behaviour in classrooms and in the workplace.

Apprentices develop their confidence and resilience because of their apprenticeship. They have a positive impact at work by taking on additional responsibilities, working independently and as part of a team. Level 5 nursing associate apprentices work independently to manage non-complex medical bays. Police constable apprentices become resilient by learning to deal with challenging solicitors and take evidence from witnesses who have experienced traumatic events.

Apprentices feel safe. They demonstrate a strong, applied understanding of safeguarding in the workplace. For example, level 6 physiotherapy apprentices work sensitively with external agencies when dealing with incidents of suspected domestic violence.

Apprentices enjoy the positive and productive relations they have with university staff and value the support that they receive. Library staff help apprentices to develop their academic skills. Learning and development coaches (LDCs) provide clear direction to help apprentices build their resilience to cope with the demands of their work and studies.

Staff embed fundamental British values carefully and effectively into classroom practices. They provide apprentices with opportunities to participate in campaigns, for example World AIDS Day to raise awareness of what life is like while living with HIV and AIDS. Apprentices take on active roles such as being a course representative to represent the views of their peers. Level 6 police constable apprentices explore the importance of showing respect and tolerance to people who are in police custody.

Apprentices have access to a wide range of enrichment opportunities at the university, such as sports clubs, societies and yoga classes. However, apprentices' participation in these activities is low.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear and ambitious rationale for their apprenticeship curriculums. They collaborate with employers to identify skills gaps locally and regionally. Their aim is to provide a skilled pipeline of trained professionals to meet the requirements of the priority industry sectors within the Greater Manchester region. For example, staff in civil engineering and construction work with employers effectively to plan projects such as the development and testing of temporary structural works.

Leaders have appointed highly qualified and experienced staff to teach apprentices, many of whom are dual professionals. Staff benefit from bespoke professional development and retain their sector-relevant registrations with organisations such as the Health and Care Professions Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council. They complete training on providing effective feedback, assessment and using IT in teaching to develop their teaching skills further. As a result, almost three quarters of apprentices achieve the highest grades in their final assessments.

Lecturers use the information about what apprentices know and can do at the beginning of their apprenticeship to plan individualised curriculums for apprentices. In chartered surveying, apprentices that have completed previous qualifications join the apprenticeship in the third year. Level 7 advanced clinical practitioner apprentices, with qualifications and experience in prescribing medication, have their training tailored so they do not repeat the same learning.

Lecturers sequence apprenticeship curriculums logically so that apprentices build their knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally. Level 6 healthcare science practitioner apprentices learn about aseptic technique and streaking methods before analysing the growth of bacteria and identifying types of organisms. Nursing associate apprentices learn how to assess blood glucose, support nurses to care for patients with a catheter and know why this care is important for patients. Apprentices vastly improve their knowledge and skills over time.

Lecturers and clinical staff use a variety of effective teaching techniques and high-quality resources to ensure that apprentices retain information in their long-term memories. They provide apprentices with rich learning experiences. Apprentices that study the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship use the simulation suite to practise medical procedures such as taking blood samples and completing patient observations. In policing, apprentices develop their interview skills and experience the reality of a police custody environment in the simulation suite. However, in a few cases apprenticeship lecturers do not provide apprentices with suitably demanding tasks and do not accurately identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge.

Apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported effectively by university staff to support them to achieve well and in line with their peers. They are given extra time for assessments and have special arrangements for online examinations to aid concentration. Nursing associate apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities speak positively of the support they receive, the resources that have been put in place for them and the varied work placement opportunities they experience. This gives them useful insight into the varied organisations and roles of nursing associates.

Lecturers, LDCs and employers work collaboratively to effectively coordinate apprentices' on- and off-the-job training. This ensures that apprentices have opportunities to swiftly practise what they learn at work. For example, level 6 construction site manager apprentices learn about the importance of providing clear safety instructions before being given additional safety responsibilities at work. Apprentices quickly develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Apprentices continue to develop their English, mathematical and digital skills well. They develop academic writing skills, use formulas to calculate medication and develop high-quality 'netiquette' when completing online consultations with patients.

Lecturers and LDCs ensure that apprentices receive a range of useful careers information. This helps apprentices to make informed choices about their next steps. Apprentices routinely discuss this with their LDCs at progress review meetings. Apprentices have access to drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments and well-qualified careers advisers.

Leaders have effective quality assurance and improvement processes, including for their subcontracted provision. They have in place assessment boards, internal audits, management information reports and a high-quality apprenticeship project plan, to monitor the quality of education that apprentices receive. This ensures that most managers are now making swift progress to continually improve the apprenticeships for which they are responsible. However, in a few apprenticeships attendance and retention rates are too low.

Staff feel proud to work at the university and value the positive, inclusive and collegiate working environment. They have access to an extensive employee assistance programme, counselling and mental health first aiders. However, a few staff report that their workloads are too high.

Leaders subcontract a proportion of the level 6 police constable apprenticeship to Greater Manchester Police and UCLan. There has been rapid recruitment to ensure that Greater Manchester Police meets its national government recruitment targets. While recruitment is high, too many apprentices leave their apprenticeship early, with many identifying that a career in the police force is not what they expected. Leaders are continuing to work closely with Greater Manchester Police to make improvements by ensuring that potential apprentices receive clear and detailed information, advice and guidance about the realities of a career in the police force. This is beginning to have a positive impact in reducing the number of apprentices that leave their apprenticeship early.

Those responsible for governance are qualified and experienced to undertake their roles. They have a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship curriculums. They provide effective support and scrutiny to senior leaders to ensure that action is taken to bring about swift improvements. For example, leaders are working diligently to reduce the number of apprentices on policing and chartered surveying apprenticeships who leave their apprenticeship early, or before they complete their final assessments.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that more chartered surveying and police constable apprentices are retained on their apprenticeships.
- Ensure that apprentices who complete their academic qualifications also complete their final assessments for their apprenticeship.
- Improve apprentices' attendance across all apprenticeships.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133845
Address	The Old Fire Station Salford Greater Manchester M5 4WT
Contact number	01612 955000
Website	https://www.salford.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Professor Nic Beech
Provider type	Higher education institution
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 May 2019
Main subcontractors	Greater Manchester Police University of Central Lancashire

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeships quality assurance lead, 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 apprentices' work, seeking the views of apprentices, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Suzanne Horner, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Whelan	His Majesty's Inspector
Victoria Wickington	Ofsted Inspector
Emma King	Ofsted Inspector
Jaqui Scott	Ofsted Inspector
Viki Faulkner	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024