

Inspection of University of Lancaster

Inspection dates:

27 February to 1 March 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

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Lancaster University is a higher education institution in Lancashire. It offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in a variety of sectors.

Lancaster University has been training apprentices since 2018. At the time of the inspection, there were 88 apprentices in learning. Thirty-eight apprentices studied the senior leader (degree) apprenticeship, and 50 apprentices studied the senior leader apprenticeship.

Tutors teach apprentices both online and face to face.

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

Tutors support apprentices to develop their confidence and self-belief. They work closely with workplace mentors to ensure that apprentices routinely practise their skills at work. This enables apprentices to confidently manage conflict between staff and make carefully considered management decisions.

Apprentices regularly reflect on their personal and professional development as senior leaders. This helps them to identify improvements in their leadership practice, for example how they successfully manage people, systems and processes at work. Apprentices grow into credible, trusted and successful leaders.

Tutors effectively teach fundamental British values to apprentices. Apprentices learn about ethical leadership, codes of conduct, labelling and prejudice. They confidently apply this knowledge to promote a safe, respectful and collaborative workplace for their teams.

Apprentices feel safe. They benefit from supportive relationships with their tutors, coaches and mentors. Most apprentices attend and enjoy their training sessions. They are ambitious to achieve, and they progress well in their careers. A few apprentices feel frustrated with the frequent last-minute changes to the timetable for their training sessions.

Although too many apprentices leave before completing their apprenticeships, most of those who remain on their apprenticeship successfully achieve merit and distinction grades in their final assessments.

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

Apprentices at the University of Lancaster receive high-quality training. Leaders provide an ambitious apprenticeship curriculum that challenges most apprentices to achieve their full potential.

Tutors, coaches and mentors are specialists in their leadership fields. They hold relevant professional and teaching qualifications. Many are chartered managers. Tutors, coaches and mentors benefit from a wide range of training, for instance supporting apprentices through their end-point assessments, mentoring and coaching, disability inclusion awareness and exploring bias in teaching practice. This helps tutors, coaches and mentors to further improve their teaching skills and subject knowledge.

Leaders and tutors provide a coherent and logically structured curriculum. Apprentices first learn about leadership and organisational behaviour, business ethics and sustainability. After this, apprentices learn about business economics and strategic business planning and development. Consequently, apprentices, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be successful at work.

Tutors use assessment well. They ask probing questions, have engaging discussions and set challenging written assignments for apprentices. This identifies any gaps in apprentices' knowledge and enables tutors to adjust their teaching. As a result, apprentices know more, remember more and can do more during their apprenticeships.

Apprentices quickly develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and behaviours. They sensitively manage change and use different leadership approaches to motivate their teams. Most apprentices make their expected progress. However, a small minority of apprentices have not completed their apprenticeships on time. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to ensure that they swiftly complete their apprenticeship.

Apprentices have access to a wide range of useful careers information and resources. Most apprentices know what their next steps are once they complete their apprenticeships. They frequently discuss their career plans with their coaches, mentors and workplace managers.

Leaders and managers have suitable quality assurance and improvement processes in place. They have identified, and acted on, several actions to significantly improve the number of apprentices who stay on their apprenticeship programmes and achieve. For instance, leaders have introduced new coaching and mentor roles to engage and support apprentices to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. This has resulted in a steady reduction in the number of apprentices who have left their apprenticeships early.

Governors receive a range of good-quality information from leaders. They hold leaders to account to make the necessary changes to improve the standard of apprentices' training. For example, to provide a broader range of training to further develop tutors' teaching skills.

Governors and leaders do not currently use their apprentices' destination data to inform appropriate improvements to the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Continue to reduce the number of apprentices who leave their apprenticeships before completing their course, and the number of apprentices who have not completed their apprenticeships on time.
- Analyse apprentices' destination data to inform appropriate improvements to the curriculum.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133831
Address	University House Bailrigg Lancaster Lancashire LA1 4YW
Contact number	01524 592 525
Website	www.lancaster.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Professor Andrew John Schofield
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 academic quality and standards 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

Kim Bleasdale, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ceri Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Whelan	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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