

Inspection of University of Chichester

Inspection dates:

24 to 27 September 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

The University of Chichester (the University) is the only university based in West Sussex, with campuses in Chichester and Bognor Regis. Leaders and staff at the University started teaching apprenticeships in 2016, alongside established undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

At the time of the inspection, there were 377 higher-level and degree apprentices in training at the University. There were 292 enrolled on standards-based degree apprenticeships at level 6 and 43 at level 7. Of these, 98 apprentices were on social worker, 56 on mechanical engineer, 34 on chartered manager, 35 on electrical/electronic technical support engineer, 39 on software engineer and 26 on digital marketer apprenticeships. There were also 42 apprentices studying the level 7 senior leader standard. There were 42 apprentices on the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship.

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

Apprentices value the training they receive from teachers who are experts and have up-to-date knowledge of their subjects. Apprentices make a positive contribution at their work as a result of their training. They learn new skills and knowledge quickly that enables them to participate in business-critical projects that have, for example in food production, led to improved environmental efficiency and cost savings.

Apprentices are well motivated to learn. They develop positive attitudes, confidence and resilience at work. For example, teaching staff ensure that level 6 social worker apprentices learn about the breadth and depth of social work practice. Apprentices develop knowledge and key skills to support clients in a range of contexts, as well as understanding the key concepts of professionalism.

Apprentices benefit from high-quality industry-specific resources which help them to learn effectively. These include immersive sensory learning technologies that recreate sounds and visuals from a range of clinical settings. At the University's technology park, apprentices have access to industry-specific electronics, mechanics and fabrication laboratories and specialist resources such as 3D printers.

Apprentices are well supported to develop a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the University's environment, at work and in their personal lives. Nursing and social worker apprentices benefit from forums where they discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in healthcare. Senior leader apprentices work together in groups to identify creative solutions to workplace challenges through exchange of ideas and reflection on the results. Consequently, apprentices learn how to manage conflict resolution and healthy relationships in work.

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

Leaders and governors have put in place a well-considered and ambitious curriculum for the provision of higher-level and degree apprenticeships. They work well with employers to ensure the apprenticeships they offer are relevant to the needs of their businesses, align with identified skills priorities and provide progression opportunities. For example, employers have plans in place to offer chartered engineer status for graduating apprentices to help retain and further develop their staff.

Leaders have raised awareness of apprenticeships successfully which enables apprentices from a broad range of backgrounds to pursue a higher-level or degree apprenticeship. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of young people enrolling on an apprenticeship as an alternative to full-time university courses. Apprentices value the opportunity to work and study for a degree highly. Similarly, the inclusion of younger employed apprentices helps address the significant skills shortages in engineering as identified in the local skills improvement plan.

Leaders and teachers work in partnership with employers and stakeholders to ensure that the apprenticeships they teach meet the needs of the professional, statutory and regulatory bodies such as Social Work England or the Nursing and Midwifery Council. For example, teachers work with local authorities, employers and service users to design and teach the level 6 social worker apprenticeship. Apprentices complete carefully planned placements that build their understanding of the breadth and depth of social work. Apprentices develop the knowledge, skills, behaviours and resilience required. As a result, they gain the high status, professional recognition they need to become registered social workers or nursing associates and succeed in their careers.

Teachers plan teaching and learning that builds on what apprentices know and can do. For example, level 7 senior leader apprentices focus on operational activities such as delivering services or products to clients and ensuring the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the business. In year two, they progress to learning how to apply their knowledge strategically. However, teachers have not been persistent in supporting apprentices to build their portfolio that showcases their skills and development. As a result, too many are delayed in progressing to their final assessment.

Leaders have taken a range of appropriate actions since the monitoring visit. They have restructured the management of apprenticeships precisely. They have established a coherent committee structure which includes apprentices. As a result, leaders and governors have effective oversight of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders have taken swift action to resolve identified weaknesses. For example, revisions to the curriculum for business programmes have increased the number of apprentices completing their final assessments, many of whom attain a distinction.

Leaders have successfully implemented changes that support continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Managers use team teaching, peer observation of teaching and apprentice feedback to monitor the effectiveness of teaching on the programme. Annual peer observation informs annual appraisals and the setting of staff targets aligned to their aspirations and planned development activities.

Leaders have not applied their quality assurance arrangements to the subcontracted provision. As a result, not all apprentices working towards functional skills qualifications benefit from high-quality teaching and assessment. As a result, too many of the small number of apprentices studying these subjects fail their exams multiple times.

Apprentices benefit from an extensive offer of careers advice and guidance for their next steps. Guest speakers talk about career opportunities in a range of specialisms that apprentices may wish to move on to in the future. Professional careers advisers provide useful workshops and individual advice interviews that support apprentices with CV writing and preparing for job interviews.

Leaders have established a broad range of personal development opportunities, ensuring apprentices develop beyond their technical skills. Apprentices benefit from interactive sessions that build resilience and support conflict resolution and healthy relationships at work. Teachers provide appropriate and relevant guidance about physical and mental health, including access to a wide range of university support and well-being services. Apprentices report joining the gym and sports activities such as the badminton society. Apprentices rightly feel well prepared for study. They have a good understanding of how their personal relationships and mental and physical health impact their behaviour and work.

Apprentices with additional needs benefit from helpful support plans which identify agreed strategies to support their learning. For example, teachers use 'dyslexia stickers' on assignments submitted for marking, which ensures apprentices are not unfairly disadvantaged for spelling and grammatical errors. Learning support staff work with employers to support apprentices in the workplace effectively. For example, apprentices with autism struggling with teamwork benefit from reasonable adjustments that enable them to thrive in a busy working environment.

Teaching staff are well qualified and have appropriate industry experience. They use their vocational expertise and knowledge very well to plan and teach lessons. Apprentices benefit from teaching and learning that engages and maintains their interests well in lessons. For example, business apprentices understand financial management and how to interpret financial statements, which enables them to complete financial projects with cash flows and assets. Level 6 social worker apprentices develop their knowledge of underpinning theories and associated skills through case presentations and group discussions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Support apprentices with guidance that enables them to capture workplace evidence effectively, so they are well prepared for their final assessment.
- Ensure apprentices who need to achieve functional skills qualifications benefit from a well-planned curriculum and effective teaching and learning support that enables them to make swift progress.
- Improve the oversight of provision, specifically that taught by subcontractor partners.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133868
Address	Bishop Otter College College Lane Chichester West Sussex PO19 6PE
Contact number	01243816000
Website	https://www.chi.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Professor Jane Longmore
Provider type	Higher education institution
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Havant and South Downs College

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality and standards, 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

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