

Southampton Solent University

Higher education institution

Inspection dates

30 October – 2 November 2018

Overall effectiveness		Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Apprenticeships Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	
Outcomes for learners	Good	
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Apprentices rapidly develop good clinical and health-related vocational skills and behaviour to the standards expected by employers.
- Apprentices benefit from good support provided by university staff and their employers. This helps them to overcome personal difficulties that might otherwise stop them learning.
- University tutors and work-based mentors closely monitor apprentices' clinical skills in the workplace. As a result, apprentices make very good progress and develop high-level technical skills and knowledge that their employers value.
- Lecturing staff use their considerable vocational knowledge and strong occupational expertise effectively to inspire and motivate apprentices.
- Apprentices receive good-quality impartial advice and guidance, which helps them make well-informed educational and career choices.
- A high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications in the planned time and progress into sustained employment.
- Apprentices in health and social care benefit from access to very well-equipped and well-resourced clinical demonstration facilities.
- Leaders have developed effective partnerships with other organisations. These help them to respond well to the educational and workforce needs of the area.
- Governors use their expertise and skills effectively to hold senior leaders and managers to account for the quality and outcomes of the provision.
- Staff do not assess apprentices' skills in English and mathematics well enough at the start of their programmes.
- Apprentices' personal development reviews are not fully effective. Too few employers take part in the process, and written feedback from university staff is often too brief and unspecific.
- Leaders and managers are not able to check apprentices' progress in detail, because of a lack of comprehensive data.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Southampton Solent University is a higher education institution offering a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate awards, as well as higher and degree-level apprenticeships at levels 5 and 6. Apprentices working towards qualifications above level 5 are not within Ofsted's scope for inspection.
- At the time of the inspection, the university had 255 apprentices up to level 5. Most apprentices are on courses in health and social care with specialisms in nursing and health science. A few apprentices are working towards an apprenticeship in operational management. Just over half the apprentices are working towards apprenticeships based on frameworks, the rest on standards-based apprenticeships.
- The university runs from two principal campuses, the East Park Terrace in the city centre where courses are organised around several schools of study, and the Warsash School of Maritime Science and Engineering, which focuses on the provision of training and education for seafarers and for those intending to make a career in the maritime industry.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the link between initial assessment and programme planning by developing clearer strategies to support and check the development of apprentices' skills, including those in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by encouraging greater sharing of ideas and good practice between teaching staff and across different apprenticeship programmes.
- Improve the effectiveness of apprentices' personal development reviews by:
 - providing written feedback that gives apprentices a clear understanding of their progress to date and helps them know what they need to do to improve their skills to higher levels
 - involving employers more in reviews of apprentices' progress so that they know how well their apprentices are doing, and what skills they need to develop and practise in the workplace
 - systematically monitoring the quality of progress reviews to ensure that these improvements have taken place.
- Make sure that managers give senior leaders up-to-date information on key areas of performance, such as on the progress of current apprentices against all aspects of their apprenticeship qualifications.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, managers and governors have an ambitious vision for the university and its contribution to the economic, social and workforce needs of Hampshire and the surrounding area. They successfully communicate this vision to staff through a set of core values that are well understood.
- The vice-chancellor and the university's senior leadership team work closely and particularly well with a wide range of local and regional employers. They also work with the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), to ensure that the institution's curriculum is highly responsive to local priorities and regional skills needs. Leaders make sure that close and highly effective joint working with employers remains at the centre of the university's industry-led curriculums.
- Leaders and managers use their links with partners to increase social mobility and participation in education and training through apprenticeships. They offer a varied curriculum that meets the needs of local communities. Employers, local NHS trusts, the local authority and community organisations collaborate with the university to plan appropriate training and sustainable employment opportunities. As a result, successful apprentices benefit from access to further learning and employment across Hampshire and the wider Solent region. Apprentices work in priority sectors such as healthcare services, health science, nursing and operations management.
- Curriculum leaders promote high standards of teaching and learning, and their day-to-day management is effective. Managers do evaluate and improve their programmes using methods such as peer observations, learner satisfaction surveys and final outcomes for learners. However, leaders do not ensure that staff routinely identify and share best practice from across the different apprenticeship subjects. As a result, apprentices in health and social care receive a less well-organised experience than those in operations management. Leaders have not ensured that staff report in enough detail on all aspects of apprentices' work-based progress and performance through individual progress reviews.
- Managers evaluate the work of staff effectively and make sure that they receive support to improve. They set suitably challenging and relevant development targets for individual staff members. Course leaders and lecturing staff make good use of plentiful professional development opportunities to improve their individual teaching practice and to ensure that their subject-specific vocational practices match industry standards.
- Leaders make sure that the university is inclusive and welcoming. Leaders closely monitor their promotion of equality and diversity themes and implement an effective action plan. Managers' analysis of data shows that no significant differences exist between the achievement of groups of apprentices. Apprentices benefit from the diverse cultures and backgrounds of the university's wider student population and take part in a broad range of enrichment events. They also take part in many student-led clubs and societies. Such activities help develop apprentices' self-confidence and their understanding of how to live and work in diverse communities.
- Leaders have good oversight and management of subcontracting partners who provide apprentices in nursing and health sciences with access to specialist clinical training.

Managers work closely with NHS partners to make sure that training is appropriately challenging. They ensure that apprentices receive a good-quality experience, for example when they are developing clinical reasoning skills covering cardiovascular, respiratory, alimentary, musculoskeletal and nervous systems.

The governance of the provider

- Governors have an incisive and well-developed understanding of the needs of the local communities served by the university. They bring to the board a breadth of knowledge and experience from industry, commerce and education that helps them to check that the institution's mission and strategy are well matched to regional and national priorities.
- Governors check the university's performance carefully, for example in relation to safeguarding, quality of teaching and outcomes for learners, and progress against improvement targets. They closely check the information presented to them, where necessary asking relevant questions and giving challenge to senior leaders and managers.
- Governors understand the strengths and areas for improvement for the university through their close reading of academic board reports. Board members carry out regular visits to individual schools and departments to gain first-hand understanding of course activities. They talk with staff and apprentices to gain insight into curriculum, standards and performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and managers have put in place up-to-date policies and well-managed systems for the safeguarding of apprentices, including while on clinical placement at subcontractors. Managers make sure all university staff involved with the apprenticeship programme are subject to safer recruitment checks.
- The university's designated safeguarding lead officers investigate and record individual cases well, including any actions taken to help learners with safeguarding concerns. Managers keep a detailed safeguarding incident log which they review often to find trends and patterns. Leaders maintain very productive links with a range of external partner agencies and seek their expert advice when deciding on the most appropriate action to help assure the health, well-being and safety of apprentices.
- Apprentices benefit from the same support arrangements as university students, which cover, for example, mental health, finance and counselling. A high number of students including apprentices use the services and value them highly.
- Governors, senior leaders and managers are mindful of their responsibilities and have made good progress with the implementation of the 'Prevent' duties to protect apprentices from any threats regarding radicalisation and extremism. Staff have had up-to-date training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They use the skills they gain to keep vigilant about changes in apprentices' behaviour that may indicate they are at risk. Apprentices have a secure understanding of safeguarding, safe working practices and the threats posed by radicalisation and extremism. They know how to report any concerns they may have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The large majority of lecturers are enthusiastic and use their extensive vocational experience and good industry links very well to teach interesting lessons that capture and keep apprentices' interest. As a result, most apprentices make good progress and successfully develop their understanding and skills beyond the requirements of their qualification. Most lecturers in health and social care and operations management use a wide range of strategies to keep apprentices' focus on the topics taught, and to assess the depth of learners' knowledge and understanding.
- Apprentices are well motivated to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, a group of apprentices in nursing on a planned study day booked themselves on to the paediatric ward to gain some initial workplace experience before they started their work placement in this area.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning and are actively engaged in developing the skills required to succeed. They work enthusiastically and confidently with lecturers and their peers to apply theories and skills successfully to different workplace settings. For example, one apprentice in operations management put in place a diagnostic activity that helped to identify accurately strengths and weaknesses in the team that they managed. This helped them to plan personalised training and support; as a result, the team's performance improved quickly.
- Apprentices confidently develop their digital skills and make increasingly effective use of an impressive range of online resources on the university's virtual learning environment. They develop their independent learning skills through useful planned activities, including extra reading, website links to relevant videos, and academic reading and writing exercises.
- Apprentices benefit from high levels of support that meet their additional learning needs. Tutors accurately assess apprentices' additional support needs at the start of their course. They make sure that appropriate support such as assistive technology or note-takers are quickly put into place following diagnostic assessment. As a result, apprentices with additional support needs make consistently strong progress and achieve their qualifications at least as well as their peers.
- Resources to help apprentices in their learning are plentiful and of a very high standard. Classrooms and lecture theatres provide a welcoming and conducive learning environment that apprentices value highly. In health and social care, apprentices benefit from access to excellent practical teaching resources and industry-standard facilities. They use these to practise and improve their clinical practices, for example by using a simulated hospital ward including a nurses' station, a doctor's surgery and a care home setting. In a few instances, classrooms in health and social care are too small for the number of apprentices, which inhibits their enjoyment of learning.
- Initial assessment of learners' skills requires improvement. Apprentices who have already achieved high-grade GCSEs in English and mathematics do not benefit from a further assessment to gauge their starting points in these essential skills accurately. As a result, lecturers are not able to plan a range of personalised learning activities that provide further extension for apprentices in these skills.
- Assessment is frequent, fair and thorough. Most lecturers effectively plan and organise a

good range of teaching, learning and assessment activities that successfully engage apprentices of different abilities. Teaching staff carefully check and assess learning, helping apprentices to analyse their work and improve their skills. However, in a small minority of lessons, lecturers are too accepting of perfunctory responses provided by apprentices that do not confirm or extend learning sufficiently. In these lessons, apprentices are less engaged in their learning and make slower progress than they should.

- Lecturers successfully help apprentices to develop skills in English. Most teaching staff give apprentices prompt, effective, written and oral feedback on their written assignments. For example, staff help apprentices understand the importance of grammatical accuracy, and the correct use of referencing in their reports and essays. They also make sure that apprentices spell technical terms correctly. As a result, apprentices quickly improve their academic writing skills and the quality of their final assignments is high.
- Lecturers do not develop apprentices' mathematical skills sufficiently. For example, staff only give health and social care apprentices intensive support with their mathematical skills before they take the medication module where they need to complete complex calculations for the administration of medicine. Apprentices in operational management develop their mathematical skills well.
- Tutors set appropriate learning targets for framework and standards-based apprentices. Targets are individualised and focus on the workplace skills that apprentices need to develop. These help them to focus their efforts in the right areas. On standards-based apprenticeships, lecturers skilfully use activities that support development and provide good preparation for end-point assessment. For example, apprentices confidently develop the skills and behaviours to lead a professional discussion with a patient with a long-term health need and to develop a treatment plan that considers the needs of the patient and their family. However, for apprentices working towards frameworks in health and social care, tutors focus too much on the reporting of unit completions rather than on their wider skills. As a result, a few apprentices have a limited understanding of their progress against all aspects of their framework. They are unsure how many hours they need to log for each of the competencies or how many competencies can be assessed in a simulated environment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices are articulate, ambitious and proud of their achievements. They quickly grow in confidence and most can describe in detail the progress they are making in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding, and how they apply these attributes to the workplace.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning. They are punctual to lessons, attend well and closely follow guidance and instructions from their lecturers. Most apprentices take an active part in lessons, working collaboratively with other apprentices and showing the values of respect and tolerance that mirror the values of their employers and the university. Apprentices take pride in their work and try to make the best progress they can.
- Apprentices routinely work to high industry standards. They quickly develop good skills in their vocational areas. They develop well the necessary professional behaviour to carry

out increasingly complex clinical and managerial tasks in the workplace. For example, in health and social care, apprentices become much more confident in their medical diagnostic skills when communicating with patients or liaising with other clinical and medical staff about the most suitable treatment plan. Apprentices in operations management confidently apply their new knowledge in such areas as team-building and problem-solving, and routinely take on more roles and responsibilities at work.

- Apprentices understand how to improve their English and mathematical skills. Lecturing staff work hard to set English and mathematics tasks in a vocational context, to make these meaningful and relevant to apprentices. For example, in health and social care staff help apprentices to record accurately different forms of numerical information about patients' vital signs. In operations management, apprentices quickly gain a good understanding of the importance of clarity when communicating with colleagues while managing complex projects.
- Too few apprentices receive help from useful personal development reviews with university staff. Not enough employers are present or sufficiently involved in setting targets for apprentices during these progress reviews. As a result, they do not have a precise understanding of the progress their apprentices are making. The standard of written feedback provided by staff is often too poor for apprentices to know clearly what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.
- A small minority of apprentices benefit from a level 3 accredited programme called 'bridging the gap', which supports the development of their academic study skills, including mathematics, English, anatomy and physiology. This helps prospective apprentices to assess their readiness to progress to higher education.
- Apprentices receive good-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance. They have a good understanding of the next career steps they can take on completing their apprenticeships. Apprentices get effective support during their apprenticeships to widen their understanding of the career and progression options available to them. However, apprentices' destinations are not routinely checked to assess the impact of careers guidance.
- Apprentices routinely adopt safe working practices and feel safe when at work. They confidently use their new knowledge to inform workplace practices and to educate their colleagues. Apprentices have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the workplace, in their personal lives and when using social media. Apprentices routinely monitor their own health, safety and welfare needs when working in the community or with vulnerable client groups. They have a secure and well-informed understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle when working shift patterns in the workplace.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The very large majority of apprentices taking foundation degrees in health and social care successfully complete their programmes of study. Their achievement rates are high and improving over time.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieved their qualifications within the planned time rose significantly in 2017/18 to well above that of similar providers.
- No significant differences in achievement exist between groups of apprentices. Where

gaps exist, subject leaders check these closely, and quickly develop suitable action plans.

- Apprentices' attainment is good. Just over half gain merit grade or above in their end-of-course assignments. A small minority achieve a distinction.
- Most apprentices who have passed GCSEs in English and in mathematics before joining the apprenticeship programme develop and extend their skills in academic writing and numeracy skills. They confidently apply these essential skills in health, clinical and managerial settings and in their personal lives.
- Most apprentices make good progress developing their vocational skills, and the standard of their work is high. Apprentices confidently demonstrate new skills and apply them well in the workplace. Employers support apprentices well by giving access to extra clinical training and continuous professional development opportunities that enhance and extend their medical practices. For example, in health and social care, nursing apprentices develop good skills in the application of cannulation and quickly become valued members of the clinical team.
- Employers are universally positive about the strong occupational and employability skills that apprentices gain from their course. They value the way that apprentices apply these in the workplace. As a result, most apprentices secure permanent employment following graduation.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133878
Type of provider	Higher education institution
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	281
Principal/CEO	Professor Graham Baldwin
Telephone number	02380 319000
Website	www.solent.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	8	247		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	–	–	–	–	–	–		
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	None							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	None							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Portsmouth Hospital NHS Trust Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeship coordinator, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent academic standards report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection considered all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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Carolyn Brownsea	Ofsted Inspector
Penny Mathers	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Williams	Ofsted Inspector

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