

University of Cumbria

Higher education institution

Inspection dates

26–29 March 2019

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		Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Governors, leaders and managers have a clear vision and a strong determination to provide high-quality apprenticeships. As a result, the quality of apprenticeship provision is good.
- Apprentices benefit from very effective teaching that has a clear focus on developing their knowledge and clinical skills.
- The well-designed apprenticeship programme is extremely effective in meeting the needs of employers and in addressing skills shortages in Cumbria and the region.
- Rigorous support for apprentices who have additional learning or support needs enables them to make good progress which is in line with that of their peers.
- Apprentices benefit from effective enrichment activities and additional qualifications that help them to become more responsive to the patients and service users in their care.
- Apprentices gain from highly accessible and high-quality careers advice and guidance that support them effectively in planning for the next stage in their careers.
- Apprentices demonstrate very high standards of the professional behaviours expected of healthcare practitioners. They are focused on, and committed to, improving the quality of care for their patients and service users.
- Leaders and managers have insufficient oversight of the progress that apprentices make in the development of vocational skills in the workplace.
- Lecturers do not routinely plan for the development of apprentices' mathematical skills. Consequently, apprentices do not receive sufficient support to help them improve these skills rapidly.
- Lecturers do not identify, or use information about, apprentices' individual starting points well enough to ensure that all apprentices fulfil their potential.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The University of Cumbria is the only university in Cumbria. It has approximately 10,000 students, two thirds of whom are undergraduates. Postgraduate students make up approximately one third of students. The university employs 995 staff across four sites in Carlisle, Ambleside, Lancaster and London.
- In September 2017, the University of Cumbria began delivering levy-funded level 5 standards-based apprenticeships in assistant practitioner in health and social care. This incorporates the award of a foundation degree in health and social care. The programme is two years in duration. Currently, there are 37 apprentices on the level 5 programme. The university subcontracts English and mathematics functional skills qualifications to a number of colleges when needed. The university offers apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7, which are not in scope for this inspection.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve leaders' and managers' oversight of the progress that apprentices make in the development of vocational skills in the workplace. Ensure that leaders and managers pay close attention to the monitoring, tracking and recording of apprentices' vocational skills so that records are of a consistently high quality.
- Identify accurately apprentices' starting points and use the information rigorously so that learning programmes, including English and mathematics, are individualised to meet the needs of apprentices and enable them to fulfil their potential.
- Ensure that lecturers provide effective support for apprentices so that they develop and apply their mathematical skills swiftly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have a successful and ambitious apprenticeship strategy to develop apprenticeship provision in areas of skills shortages across Cumbria, the north west and nationally. They have a strong determination to provide high-quality apprenticeships. Their careful strategic planning resulted in leaders making the decision to slowly increase the number of apprentices on the level 5 healthcare practitioner apprenticeship. Leaders and managers are gradually increasing apprenticeship numbers, while maintaining good quality.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of staff and apprentices. They have developed a culture of inclusivity and mutual respect. Apprentices from all backgrounds, many of whom are the first in their families to access higher education, strive to achieve their very best and fulfil their potential.
- Quality assurance processes for the academic and subcontracted elements of the apprenticeship are rigorous. Leaders and managers monitor apprentices' academic achievements closely. For example, managers and governors monitor apprentices' work formally through academic governance committees (AGCs). Leaders and managers have a good oversight of the quality of the academic education that apprentices receive.
- Self-assessment is evaluative and evidence-based. The self-assessment report is mostly accurate in identifying the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The quality improvement plan, which relates to the self-assessment report, provides clear actions for improvement. The apprenticeship management team monitors the impact of actions frequently. Actions are effective in improving the quality of the apprenticeship provision.
- Relationships with employers and key partners are strong and managers use them well to develop effective apprenticeship programmes. Managers have consulted closely with employers, such as residential care homes, GP practices and NHS trusts, to develop a flexible curriculum. This ensures that apprenticeship programmes benefit employers and apprentices. For example, managers introduced the level 3 medication qualifications to the apprenticeship in order to meet employers' needs and enhance the skills of apprentices in the workplace.
- The well-designed apprenticeship programme is extremely effective in meeting the needs of employers and in addressing skills shortages in Cumbria and regionally.
- Leaders and managers pay close attention to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They review lecturers' performances rigorously. Leaders and managers have high expectations of their well-qualified and experienced lecturers. All lecturers maintain their nursing registrations. They ensure that they keep up to date with developments in their nursing pathways, for example in mental health and adult nursing. Lecturers share good practice through peer review of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, lecturers develop their knowledge and understanding of apprenticeships.
- Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices benefit from highly accessible and good-quality careers advice and guidance. Well-qualified careers advisers skilfully support apprentices to plan the next steps in their careers.
- The recording of apprentices' vocational skills and behaviours in the workplace is

insufficiently detailed. As a result, leaders and managers have insufficient oversight of the progress that apprentices make in the development of their vocational skills in the workplace.

The governance of the provider

- Board members (members) are instrumental in ensuring that apprenticeship programmes are intrinsic to the university's strategic plan for growth. They are committed to developing and expanding high-quality apprenticeships that align with local, regional and national skills priorities.
- Members oversee very effectively the quality of the level 5 healthcare practitioner apprenticeship through the AGC. AGC members have significant experience of governance, including chairing governing boards in other universities. Members have a good range of skills and expertise, including senior academics with experience and expertise in nursing and education.
- Members set very high expectations for the quality of education and training, and the performance of staff. The recently introduced pre-briefing papers ensure that members scrutinise management reports before board meetings. As a result, members evaluate accurately the quality of the academic elements of apprenticeships. Members hold leaders and managers to account very effectively for the quality of academic performance on apprenticeships. Members are right to recognise that they need to have a greater oversight of all elements of the apprenticeship programme. They have started to rectify this issue and develop an understanding of apprentices' skills development in the workplace.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Appropriate policies and procedures, that managers update frequently, ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping apprentices safe. Leaders and managers carry out frequent risk assessments of apprentices' workplaces and ensure that apprentices understand their responsibilities in keeping safe at work. Apprentices feel safe and know how to report any concerns they may have.
- The university's inclusive student services team provides a wide range of appropriate support services. For example, apprentices have access to trained counsellors and specialist staff to help them maintain good mental health.
- The well-qualified and experienced designated safeguarding leads have appropriate links with a range of external support agencies and refer apprentices swiftly, when necessary, to keep them safe.
- Staff and apprentices receive suitable training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. The university complies with its responsibilities for the 'Prevent' duty as a higher education institution. For example, it links closely with the Department for Education regional 'Prevent' coordinator for higher education.
- Managers carry out appropriate recruitment checks of university staff. All apprentices have Disclosure and Barring Service checks to verify their suitability to work with patients

and service users.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Apprentices benefit from very effective teaching that has a clear focus on developing their knowledge, skills and professional behaviours. This helps apprentices to improve their clinical skills and encourages them to share good practice. For example, apprentices discuss articulately the links between research evidence and practice, such as moving and positioning of patients and service users.
- Well-qualified university lecturers, who have significant vocational experience, ensure that apprentices develop their theoretical knowledge well. Apprentices receive effective support in the workplace from professionally qualified workplace supervisors. As a result, apprentices apply their theoretical knowledge accurately and professionally in practical contexts.
- High-quality resources, such as those in skills laboratories and the workplace, support apprentices very effectively in developing their clinical skills. Apprentices benefit from professional seminars and additional training, such as in neuroscience and dementia training. Employers ensure that apprentices receive high-quality and relevant staff development activities that result in effective development of apprentices' skills. For example, apprentices attend training on wound care and venepuncture, which they use competently in their job roles.
- The flexible approach to the apprenticeship curriculum ensures that it meets employers' and apprentices' needs. For example, the current cohorts of apprentices have different and flexible models of off-the-job training at the university. One cohort of apprentices attend university one day per week, while another attends for block weeks.
- Attendance at off-the-job training is high. Apprentices often attend additional and varied work placements, across medical and therapy settings, that help them to develop their knowledge and skills. For example, apprentices attend placements in endoscopy units to support progression to nursing programmes.
- Induction to the programme supports apprentices effectively in understanding the academic and vocational elements of the programme. Assessment of apprentices' academic skills is thorough. Apprentices identified as needing help with their academic writing skills receive very effective individual support from their lecturers. As a result, most apprentices pass the modules of their foundation degree at the first attempt.
- Apprentices who have specific support needs receive swift and very effective support. Suitable assessments and professional support are in place for apprentices with, for example, dyslexia and dyspraxia. Lecturers ensure that apprentices who cannot attend sessions keep up to date with their work and do not fall behind.
- Feedback following assessment, particularly academic assessment, is clear and detailed and enables apprentices to improve the quality of their work. Workplace supervisors are particularly effective in supporting apprentices to develop their professional skills. For example, they swiftly identify when apprentices need more practice in developing practical skills, such as wound care.
- Apprentices and their workplace mentors identify accurately apprentices' learning and support needs. However, lecturers do not always identify, or use information about,

apprentices' individual starting points well enough to ensure that apprentices fulfil their potential.

- Lecturers do not routinely plan for the development of apprentices' mathematical skills. Apprentices do not receive sufficient support to help them develop their mathematical skills swiftly enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices grow in confidence and improve their practical and academic skills. They are proud of their achievements. They know what they need to do to complete their apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices are well prepared for the next steps in their careers or higher-level study.
- Apprentices gain and apply substantial new knowledge and skills highly effectively. They are valued members of the workforce and contribute to their employers' businesses well. Almost all apprentices apply higher-level skills in their workplaces. For example, apprentices competently apply dressings and catheterise patients and service users.
- Apprentices develop very good behaviours. These include personal and study skills that enable them to make good progress in both academic and work-based aspects of their apprenticeship. For example, apprentices develop their teamworking, problem-solving, research and reflection skills in academic sessions, which they apply to their job roles.
- Apprentices demonstrate very high standards of the professional behaviours expected of healthcare practitioners. They focus on, and commit to, improving the quality of care for their patients and service users.
- Effective enrichment activities that are relevant to apprentices' job roles lead to additional qualifications, such as storage, dispensing and recording of medication, and verification of death.
- Written work produced by apprentices is at least of the standard required, and often exceeds this. Apprentices consistently meet deadlines for the submission of work. As a result, most apprentices produce high-quality work that meets the standard of the foundation degree at the first attempt.
- Apprentices benefit from a wide range of accessible, high-quality careers advice and guidance. Most apprentices have helpful and informative one-to-one meetings with a member of the careers team. An online analytical tool that provides apprentices with information about progression routes complements the meetings with careers advisers. As a result, apprentices have a clear career plan.
- Support for apprentices is good. Apprentices have access to a range of information and services relating to the maintenance of their health and well-being. For example, apprentices can swiftly access counselling and support for positive mental health. Apprentices declaring additional needs receive good support from the disability services staff, who provide a range of individual support for apprentices. For example, apprentices benefit from using assistive technologies, such as tablet computers. They are referred to professionals such as educational psychologists if needed. As a result, apprentices who have additional support needs make good progress that is in line with their peers.
- Apprentices have a clear understanding of their job role, including their rights and

responsibilities in the workplace. They work cooperatively with workplace colleagues, their peers and academic lecturers. They gain effective skills in leading multi-disciplinary health professional visits for service users, such as leading speech therapist and dietician visits.

- Attendance at off-the-job training is high. Almost all apprentices attend their classes. On the rare occasions that apprentices do not attend their classes, they catch up by completing activities that are on the virtual learning environment. As a result, apprentices make good progress.
- Apprentices feel safe and are safe in their workplaces and at the university. Apprentices complete effective training in safeguarding, including the identification of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Staff skilfully link training to apprentices' workplaces, including the safeguarding of patients and service users. As a result, apprentices apply their knowledge to keep themselves and others, including their most vulnerable service users, safe. Apprentices know how to raise concerns at the university and in their workplaces.
- Apprentices understand and apply British values well. They are respectful to their peers, lecturers and service users and apply British values well in their workplaces. Apprentices effectively promote equality and celebrate diversity in the workplace and at the university.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The first cohort of apprentices are not due to complete their apprenticeship until September 2019. Almost all apprentices remain on their programmes. The few that left their apprenticeship did so because of health reasons or a change in career.
- All apprentices who are due to complete their apprenticeships in the next six months passed their functional qualifications at the first attempt.
- Nearly all apprentices pass their academic assessment modules at the first attempt. Half of them achieve high grades in their assessments.
- Apprentices make good progress in both academic and vocational elements of their apprenticeship. They relate their academic learning to practical activity in the workplace exceptionally well.
- Managers monitor closely the progress of different groups of apprentices, such as by cohort, gender, ethnicity and care leavers. These apprentices make at least the progress expected of them, and often exceed their target grades.
- Many apprentices gain additional responsibilities in the workplace as a result of their apprenticeship. For example, apprentices gain promotion to shift leader or gain extra responsibilities, such as administering medications.
- Apprentices from the first cohort who aspire to be nurses have received offers of places on nursing degree programmes or the registered nurse degree apprenticeship on completion of the healthcare practitioner programme.

Provider details

Unique reference number	135398
Type of provider	Higher education institution
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	41
Principal/CEO	Professor Julie Mennell
Telephone number	01524 384 384
Website	www.cumbria.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+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-	37	
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of department for nursing, health and professional practice, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathryn Townsley	Ofsted Inspector
Bev Cross	Ofsted Inspector

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