

UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY

2023-2028

INSPIRED FOR LIFE



In 2017/18 the University of Worcester undertook the strategic decision to develop and deliver higher and degree apprenticeships. This was set against the backdrop of the UK Government announcing significant reform around how apprenticeships were designed, developed, and funded.

This resulted in moving the cost from the public purse to the private purse through the introduction of an Apprenticeship Levy (tax levied against organisations whose annual salary cost exceeded £3million). Running parallel to the introduction of the Levy, was guiding employers into the position of leading on creating new Apprenticeship Standards, where they worked in partnership with apprenticeship providers to develop new Standards, with the aim of specifically meeting individual sector skills need.

In response to this, the School of Nursing and Midwifery worked in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS Trust employers and Health Education England to be one of the first Higher Education Institutions to pilot the Nursing Associate Apprenticeship programme. This role bridges the gap between the registered nurse and the healthcare assistant and is a role that features in the **NHS Long Term Plan** creating new routes into nursing and helping to meet skill shortages regionally and nationally.

At the same time Worcester Business School employer engagement activities identified a need to develop Higher and Degree Management Apprenticeships. Taking a steer from employer partners in relation to how apprenticeships met with their employment and skills strategies in succession planning and talent management, the Senior Leaders Masters Degree Apprenticeship and Operations / Departmental Manager programmes were launched in Autumn 2018.

In the summer of 2018 colleagues in the School of Education commenced a pilot of the Teacher Apprenticeship. This programme ran from July 2018 until September 2021.

As of September 2022, over 100 apprentices have successfully completed their apprenticeship across Teacher, Nursing Associate and Operations / Departmental Manager apprentices.

At the time of writing this strategy the University is supporting a range of apprentices, with the vast majority of these being Nursing Associate Apprentices, and a small number of Senior Leader Masters Degree Apprentices.

From 2023/24 the University expects to increase the number of apprentices they will be supporting. This will likely be achieved by adding the Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship and the Registered Nurse Degree (NMC 2018) Apprenticeship programmes to the existing apprenticeship portfolio.

Moving beyond 2023/24 it is anticipated that future development of apprenticeship programmes will predominantly be in areas around Health, Health & Social Care, Allied Health, Children and Young People Education.



Values and Vision

The current University Strategic Plan identifies three commitments at its core, stating that we will:

CREATE POSSIBILITIES

DEVELOP POTENTIAL

INCREASE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This Apprenticeship Strategy seeks to support the University's core strategic commitments. Running throughout these is the aim to increase the number of students studying with us, particularly in areas with national employment shortages, including nursing, wider professional allied healthcare, and education.

Over the next period, the further development of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes, will contribute to supporting the overarching aims of the Strategic Plan whilst also meeting the employment demands locally, regionally and, where appropriate, nationally, particularly in skills shortage areas such as health, adult social care, allied health and children and young people education.



Delivering our vision

Stakeholders

We will continue to build on the successes achieved since the introduction of our apprenticeship programmes to work effectively with a variety of stakeholders to contribute to the national up-skilling of the region and country's workforce agenda and to support the economic prosperity of our communities. Whilst the list is not exhaustive, our current key stakeholders include:

- Employer Organisations
- Local Enterprise Partnerships – Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull
- Worcestershire County Council and associated District Councils
- Worcestershire MPs
- Dudley Borough Council and associated partners of the Towns Fund programme
- Further Education Partners
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
- Professional Bodies
- Health Education England
- Department for Education
- Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

Oversight and Governance

At an executive level, Higher and Degree Apprenticeships form part of the portfolio of the Provost who holds the strategic responsibility for apprenticeships. The Provost is also the Chair of the University Safeguarding Committee.

The Provost, working with a range of key senior leaders, will also ensure apprenticeship programmes are introduced appropriately and developed to meet quality standards as set out in the University's Course Approval Policy and Process.

Academic governance and education quality will be subject to the normal University quality processes, including those for annual evaluation, periodic review, and academic regulations.

The University will also take note of any variations and additional considerations to align with professional bodies, as well as external quality and compliance requirements specific to apprenticeships as set out by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), the Department for Education (DfE), Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Ofsted.

Leadership and Management

Apprenticeship programmes have a strong leadership and management framework in place with clear lines of reporting and this will be maintained over the next period. Strengths in both leadership and management were recognised by Ofsted in the University's **New Provider Monitoring Visit** report, published in July 2021.

The University will continue to have a named Ofsted and ESFA Apprenticeship lead to ensure effective communication between the University and apprenticeship regulatory bodies is maintained. This requires someone who holds a position of authority in the organisation and has the relevant knowledge, experience, and seniority to be held responsible and accountable for all matters relating to Ofsted and ESFA.

Effective processes are in place for the monitoring of performance targets at a University-wide level, as well as at School and course levels.

Each Academic School has its own Senior Management Team which is responsible for all aspects of quality and student outcomes

Growth and Sustainability

As part of the strategic vision for further developing and expanding the University's apprenticeship portfolio, the University has invested in a core team to lead on this important agenda. It is envisaged as part of this strategy that the University's Academic Quality Unit will continue to work with Apprenticeships as with other academic provision through oversight of quality and standards. Furthermore, academic leadership and management of the delivery of the individual apprenticeships will remain within the management structures of the Schools.

In developing the strategy over the next five years it will also be important that there is continued close working with key stakeholders and partners to design and develop our apprenticeship offer. Stakeholder partners will include national and regional players, with a focus on educational and health and social care partners; Local Authorities;

and meet regularly to discuss and monitor apprenticeship enhancement and improvement plans. The School also has responsibility for ensuring their annual Self-Assessment Report is maintained and regularly reviewed.

The Apprenticeship Programme Sub-Committee (APSC) maintains oversight of provision and ensures systems are in place for effective delivery. APSC are also responsible for monitoring overall performance as well as the University annual Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan. This group currently also monitor matters relating to ESFA funding compliance.

APSC reports directly to the University Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC), which in turn reports to the University Academic Board.

other public sector organisations, professional bodies, the private and voluntary sector.

As the country emerges out of the pandemic the University will continue to work with our employer partners to support their future workforce planning. Through this work the University will aim to increase the number of apprenticeships on programme to over 200 by September 2024/25, and in excess of 400 by September 2026/27. All opportunities will be explored to remain ambitious in the growth of our apprenticeship provision although central to its success will be a clear business case for all new provision, carefully balanced with sustainability and responsible financial management. Therefore, any new apprenticeship programmes will be subject to the same rigour as any other new course development.

Voice of the Apprentice and Employer

Engagement with employers and apprentices remains a key feature for successful implementation of the strategy. The apprentice learning experience and employer feedback is a crucial element of the University's apprenticeship Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan and will need to be well managed as provision grows and new employers are established. This remains a highly significant aspect of Ofsted Inspection.

Strategies for feedback on quality and satisfaction will continue to be measured through, for example, module evaluation, course evaluation, student surveys, student representative systems and annual employer surveys. These are currently reviewed through overall governance and academic quality measures and will continue to feed into enhancement of the overall apprenticeship experience.

Staff Development

The University takes seriously its role in educating outstanding apprentices who will meet the workforce requirements of our employer partners now and in the future. To underpin this the University actively promotes staff development and training for all members of staff, aspiring to create and maintain a culture of 'lifelong learning'.

This Strategy recognises the importance of staff maintaining their engagement with industry. To date Continuing Professional and Personal Development (CPPD) is well embedded, and for our healthcare related apprenticeships, academic staff are required to ensure clinical credibility and competence to deliver effectively. This is supported through regular engagement with practice learning in the clinical environment and remains a key feature for future external quality inspection.

Equality and Inclusion

The University is committed to providing and supporting an environment that promotes equality and inclusion. We value the diversity of our community, and we aim to create an environment of respect where all are treated equally and where staff and apprentices can reach their full potential.

This Strategy and our commitment to apprenticeship programmes will open up broader learning opportunities to all sections of the community and will increase the opportunities for mature students, particularly working adults, and for those without traditional entry qualifications.

Performance Management, Target Setting and Key Performance Indicators

The University uses appropriate data to underpin and inform decision-making, linking data to a series of operational targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Using a Data Dashboard approach the University reviews key metrics at the Apprenticeship Programme Sub Committee and actions any appropriate remedial actions. The key headline KPIs focus on overall performance, and include recruitment, retention, completion, satisfaction rates and income.

In line with this Strategy these processes will be further strengthened, and targets will continue to be reviewed each year to ensure alignment with targets and developing growth.

Inspired for Life



Anja Seymour, Advanced Level Apprentice of the Year

The University seeks to provide an apprenticeship experience that enriches the lives of all apprentices; and is committed to a culture of partnership and support with each apprentice and their employer. The following table shows the apprenticeship programmes we aim specifically to evolve and develop over the next two years:

Apprenticeship Standard	Predicted Start Date	Predicted Numbers
L5 Nursing Associate Apprenticeship	2023/24	Up to circa 40 per annum
L6 Nursing Degree Apprenticeship	2023/24	Up to circa 30 per annum
L7 Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship	2023/24	Up to circa 20 per annum
L6 Paramedic Degree Apprenticeship	2024/25	Up to circa 30 per annum
L6 Teacher Apprenticeship (re-introduce)	2024/25	Target 30 per annum
L7 Senior Leader Master Degree Apprenticeship – Health	2024/25	Target 30 per annum
L7 Senior Leader Master Degree Apprenticeship – Education	2024/25	Target 30 per annum
L6 Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	2024/25	Target 30 per annum
L7 Physician Associate Apprenticeship	2024/25	Target 30 per annum
L5 Early Years Lead Practitioner	2024/25	Target 30 per annum
L5 Learning and Skills Teacher	2024/25	Target 30 per annum

To ensure we continue to meet the needs of our employer partners, as well as keeping pace with regional and national skill policies we will constantly monitor and review our apprenticeship development plan.

This will include looking beyond 2024/25, where we will aim to evolve and develop apprenticeship programmes in areas such as Legal and Financial Services, as well as continuing to expand our Health and Science apprenticeship programmes.



The Three Counties Centre for Health and Wellbeing will be a major new resource for skills across the health professions.



**Apprenticeship
Strategy**

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