
Approval process report

Birmingham City University, Occupational therapy, 2024-25

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve an occupational therapy programme at Birmingham City University. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme are fit to practice.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area
- Reviewed the programme against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme should be approved

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
 - Quality activity one: The visitors noted the details of staffing, for example the programme had been allocated core staffing of two full-time occupational therapy staff. This consisted of a Course Lead, and a Lecturer. However, we were unsure of the rationale for the staffing on the programme. The education provider informed us of the mechanisms to support staff, for example, we understood staffing was reviewed at each intake. We had no further questions in this area and considered the standard to be met.
- The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether the programme is approved
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year

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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme(s) detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme(s) approval / ongoing approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

The approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we take assurance that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)

- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence-based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Jennifer Caldwell	Lead visitor, occupational therapist
Joanne Stead	Lead visitor, occupational therapist
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 31 HCPC-approved programmes across six professions. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1993. This includes ten post-registration programmes for independent prescribing and supplementary prescribing annotations.

The education provider has engaged four times in the current model of quality assurance:

1. With the approval process in 2023 for the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science Degree Apprenticeship, Full time programme. At the meeting in July 2024 the Education and Training Committee agreed there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate our standards were met, and the programme was approved.
2. With the approval process in 2022 for the BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography Degree Apprenticeship, Full time programme. At the meeting in February 2023 the Education and Training Committee agreed there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate our standards were met, and the programme was approved.
3. With the approval process in 2022 for the BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy Degree Apprenticeship Full time programme. At the meeting in November 2022 the Education and Training Committee agreed there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate our standards were met, and the programme was approved.
4. With the performance review process in 2021. At the meeting in March 2023 the Education and Training Committee agreed there was sufficient evidence the standards continued to be met, and the programmes remain approved.

The proposed programme is based in the Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences. All the education provider's HCPC approved programmes sit in this faculty.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 2](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Dietitian	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2016
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2007
	Physiotherapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1993
	Speech and language therapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2001
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2007

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks and use this information to inform our risk-based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

This data is for existing provision at the institution and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Learner number capacity	1938	1953	2024-25	<p>The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>We explored resourcing for the programme as part of quality theme 1. We were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider and had no further questions.</p>
Learner non-continuation	7%	8%	2021-22	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p>

				<p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 2%.</p> <p>We reviewed learners' experience on approved programmes and any potential factors for not continuing. We were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.</p>
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	92%	92%	2021-22	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 2%.</p> <p>We reviewed learners' experience on approved programmes and any potential for employment and or further study. We were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.</p>

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2023	<p>The definition of a Silver TEF award is “Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education.”</p> <p>We reviewed learners’ experience of the quality of teaching. We were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.</p>
Learner satisfaction	80.2%	77.9%	2024	<p>This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year’s data point, the education provider’s performance has dropped by 1%.</p> <p>We reviewed the learner experience at the education provider and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.</p>
HCPC performance review cycle length	n/a	2026-27	2021-22	<p>The education provider’s next performance review is in five years’ time. This decision was made in 2021-22.</p>

We also considered intelligence from others (e.g. prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:

- Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) – they confirmed the education provider is seeking their accreditation for the programme. RCOT understood the education provider have recruited an occupational therapist as a programme lead and anticipate they will be in post from the beginning of

June 2025. We provided this information to the visitors, and they took it into consideration.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

Admissions

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Information for applicants –**
 - Applicants can find out about programmes in a number of ways. For example, through marketing materials, at open days and on request by applicants. The education provider's website also provides programme information and requirements for applications. The Course Specification document on the website provides details of the name of the final award, and any exit awards.
 - We will need to be sure how applicants provide all the information the education provider needs to come to an appropriate decision about their suitability for the programme. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links with SET 2.1.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - The Admissions Policy applies for English language, enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service checks and occupational health clearance. Candidates will undertake an interview as part of the application process. Candidates must demonstrate:
 - an understanding of the profession of the programme; and
 - an understanding of the programme requirements including the required professional standards and standards, and ethical conduct expected of occupational therapy learners and professionals.
 - Offers of a place on the programme are subject to:
 - a satisfactory performance at interview;
 - an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check; and
 - occupational health clearance.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - The education provider operates a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. This enables applicants to gain recognition for previous studies and learning that relate to the programme. This is considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The education provider's Access and Participation Plan 2020 / 21 – 2024 / 25 and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020 - 2025 outline how individuals who, may not otherwise be able to access the profession, can apply. These plans ensure each programme receives appropriate data on progression and attainment to consider as part of programme scrutiny. The programme has been developed with practice-based learning providers so they will work within their EDI policies.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: We will need to be sure how applicants provide all the information the education provider needs to come to an appropriate decision about their suitability for the programme. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links with SET 2.1.

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register¹ –**
 - Existing policies and procedures outline the process of approval from strategic approval through to education provider / Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body events. For example, BCU Course Approval / Re-approval Policy and Procedures.
 - The programme sits within a suite of other pre-registration MSc programmes, where there are shared modules and teaching. The teams are experienced in supporting learners and delivering programmes to an appropriate academic level to meet the standards. Through the education provider's internal processes, they review, moderate, monitor and enhance the programme. External examiners

¹ This is focused on ensuring providers are able to deliver qualifications at or equivalent to the level(s) in SET 1, as required for the profession(s) proposed

hold a key role in the maintenance of academic and professional standards.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The Course Monitoring and Enhancement Policy and Procedure (CME) uses recruitment, retention, and outcome data to consider performance and sustainability of each programme. The education provider works with the professional body and NHS England to engage local employers and seek their commitment to this programme. Local employers and practice-based learning partners developed the programme with the education provider. They have also committed to receiving learners from the programme.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - Existing policies, such as the Learning and Teaching Strategy and Course Monitoring and Enhancement Policy and Procedure will apply.
 - The periodic review process reviews the provision of an entire school every five years.
 - Each programme holds an annual quality day which brings together staff, learners, service users, external examiners, and practice colleagues. This quality day informs ongoing course improvements.
 - We will need to ensure the programme is effectively managed. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 3.2.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - Policies, such as the Individual Performance Review Policy, will apply. Management of the team ensures support for staff development and wellbeing, recruitment of appropriate people into appropriate roles, via school policies / procedures. The team will draw on existing expertise from within the education provider to support the development of its existing staff group. Line managers support staff and provide feedback on performance.
 - The education provider uses a Workload Allocation Model which individuals and their managers complete annually to review workload levels across the programme team. The Capability Policy provides a framework and process for addressing staff performance issues.
 - An experienced academic has been appointed into the role of Course Lead to this new programme. As a new member of the programme team, there are processes in place to support and mentor them.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - Existing processes and support are in place, such as the Academic Partnership Handbook which compiles the structures, governance, policies and principles that govern collaborative and academic partnerships. The school consults with clinical partners and employers, and hosts programme and department level regular Clinical Placement Group meetings.
 - The education provider will be working in partnership with their core employer partners.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: We will need to ensure the programme is effectively managed. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 3.2.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**
 - The education provider stated that existing processes are in place such as the Course Monitoring and Enhancement Policy and Procedure. As part of these, module leads and team members review modules and sessions on a yearly basis and integrate this feedback into their modules to enhance academic quality.
 - Those delivering the materials are required to keep themselves up to date via a variety of Continuous Professional Development activities. Specialist speakers provide links to clinical practice.
 - Each programme holds an annual Quality Day bringing together staff, learners, service users, external examiners and practice colleagues to inform improvements.
 - We will need to ensure at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links with SET 6.7.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
 - Existing processes are in place such as the Educational Placement Audit Process. This ensures department audits are regularly

performed, gaining information on equipment, staffing and service-related activity, to ensure learners receive the range of experiences required and are safe and supported. Regular communications from the education provider to the clinical teams takes place both informally through regular personal tutor visits, MS Teams calls and formal lines including practice educator training.

- The Faculty Raising and Escalating Concerns includes guidance to learners in practice-based learning. It covers concerns which refer to the disclosure of any malpractice, including acts or omissions. The Audit process ensures, enhances and develops the quality of practice learning provision.
- We will need to be sure there is an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 3.17.
- We will need to ensure practice educators undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 5.7.
- We will need to ensure learners and practice educators have the information they need in a timely manner to be prepared for practice-based learning. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 5.8.
- **Learner involvement –**
 - Existing processes are in place which create opportunities for learners to feedback include:
 - mid-module evaluations;
 - end of practice-based learning evaluations;
 - learner survey; and
 - learner representative led forums.
 - Programme leads meet learners to establish views in relation to all activity relating to the programme and their experiences both formally and informally. The team operate an 'open door' policy and through the personal tutor role ensure regular catchups offering the opportunity for feedback on a regular basis.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
 - The Monitoring of Service User and Carer Involvement Process is in place and will be used in relation to this programme. Examples of involvement include open days, interviews, simulation, on-line and face-to-face teaching.
 - Service users are consulted regarding curriculum development of all existing and future provision. A group of service users called Forum for

Accessing Community Experience (FACE) input through sharing their experiences, and involvement in discussions about developments.

- Feedback from service users and carers will be part of the learner clinical assessment process.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: We will need to be sure there is an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 3.17.

We will need to ensure practice educators undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 5.7.

We will need to ensure learners and practice educators have the information they need in a timely manner to be prepared for practice-based learning. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 5.8.

We will need to ensure at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links with SET 6.7.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
 - There is a range of support for learners. Within the academic environment, learners are allocated a named personal tutor to support them through their programme and to signpost them to wider support the education provider offers. Learners will also be supported by a mentor in practice-based learning. Learners can access the health and wellbeing teams, as well as other services such as the Student Union and Graduate Success Support Advisors. Library services offer a wide range of support, such as disability support. The Academic Development Department supports learners' academic skills such as through one-to-one tutorials.
 - Complaints can be raised by learners at any point and are investigated through the Student Complaints Procedure. The Faculty Raising and Escalating Concerns guidance describes how learners can raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.

- We will need to ensure the programme includes effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 4.10.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
 - Learners are encouraged to speak to their personal tutor and course leads regarding any concerns / suitability. The education provider has policies in relation to Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practice and Disciplinary Policy. These have established an independent process to investigate professional concerns. Learners are required to self-declare and re-enrol each year
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
 - The programme sits within the Faculty of Health Education and Life Sciences. The faculty offers an IPL programme for all learners. This involves learning with, and from, learners and professionals from a range of professions. These are designed to enable discussion, to learn from and with each other in relation to patient care and professional development, as well as in relation to the practice offered by each profession. Learners will work during practice-based learning with and alongside other professionals.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - Existing processes are in place, such as the 2021/22 – 2024/25 Access and Participation Plan. A range of support services is provided by the education provider to enable all learners, regardless of disability, health condition or learning difficulty, to access their chosen programme.
 - Programme teams respond to the needs of learners with an identified disability. This includes reasonable adjustments within the practice and academic settings. The programme team ensure there are a diverse range of learners who reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the region.
 - Programme teams embed the Learning & Teaching strategy and inclusive assessment principles to ensure no learners are disadvantaged in an assessment.
 - The Access and Participation Plan highlights key institution-wide aims, and each programme incorporates them into its delivery and support. There is a Central Disability Support Team in place and a Disability Support Tutor to help with practice-based learning. Course Monitoring and Enhancement (CME) is a quality enhancement process. This

monitors learner outcomes and progression. Key data available includes attainment information across ethnicity, gender, disability and socio-economic backgrounds. Programme leaders and school management monitor trends and seek ways to enhance performance of learners.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: We will need to ensure the programme includes effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 4.10.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - Existing processes are in place, such as the Assessment and Feedback Policy. This guides programme teams through all aspects of assessments such as internal and external verification, regular meetings of the marking team, moderation from outside the marking team, and external examiner reviews. These processes are made clear to learners throughout the programme to ensure they are aware of this process and how this process is objective.
 - All assessments have detailed criterion with clear marking grids all markers work to. There is a moderation process that requires someone from outside of the module team to review for consistency of marking.
 - Work is also reviewed by an External Examiner. For some items of assessment anonymous marking is in place. Where there is a presentational element, there are two markers. Presentations are recorded so moderation can take place. School code of practice sets out principles of good practice in relation to local implementation of assessment tasks and associated learner support.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement –**
 - The Academic Regulations and Course Monitoring and Enhancement Policy and Procedure ensure appropriate progress and achievement rules are in place and subsequently monitored. Programme leaders have access to module specific information and implement interventions and enhancements as required. Support is embedded

throughout the programme to aid progression. Every module has opportunities for feedback and tutorial support.

- We will need to ensure the education provider identifies and communicates to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory and has associated monitoring processes in place. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 4.11.
- We will need to ensure there is no confusion about which programmes we approve and which we do not. Learners, educators and the public must be clear on which programmes meet our standards for registration, and which do not. The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 3.18.
- **Appeals –**
 - Existing processes are in place, such as the Academic Appeal Procedure and Extenuation Circumstances procedure. These processes are led by the Student Governance team who manage learner appeals.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: We will need to ensure there is no confusion about which programmes we approve and which we do not. Learners, educators and the public must be clear on which programmes meet our standards for registration, and which do not. The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 3.18.

We will need to ensure the education provider identifies and communicates to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory and has associated monitoring processes in place. We will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 4.11.

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1. As noted through the previous section, there are areas to take forward into stage 2. These are outlined below.

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:

- A Senior Lecturer started on 16 July 2025. An advert for a Lecturer is waiting for approval. Module leads for joint modules include physiotherapists, speech therapists, linguists, therapeutic radiographers and dietitians. There are also a range of team members who deliver and supervise the research elements of the programme.
- On campus there are skills and simulation facilities, including a home environment, kitchens, ward spaces, an operating theatre, x-ray rooms, ward spaces, and birthing suites. Learners will have access to a specialist library, IT facilities and teaching spaces, for example lecture theatres, classrooms, and small rooms for individual tutorials.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: There are nine areas from stage 1 we will need to review through stage 2 of the process:

- SET 2.1: We will need to be sure how applicants provide all the information the education provider needs to come to an appropriate decision about their suitability for the programme.
- SET 3.2: We will need to ensure the programme is effectively managed.
- SET 3.17: We will need to be sure there is an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.
- SET 3.18: We will need to ensure there is no confusion about which programmes we approve and which we do not. Learners, educators and the public must be clear on which programmes meet our standards for registration, and which do not. The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.
- SET 4.10: We will need to ensure the programme includes effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.
- SET 4.11: We will need to ensure the education provider identifies and communicates to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory and has associated monitoring processes in place.
- SET 5.7: We will need to ensure practice educators undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.
- SET 5.8: We will need to ensure learners and practice educators have the information they need in a timely manner to be prepared for practice-based learning.
- SET 6.7: We will need to ensure at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist	15 learners, 1 cohort	05/01/2026

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

Data / intelligence considered

We also considered data points / intelligence from others (ego prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:

- NHS England (Midlands) – they informed us of the current position of occupational therapy in the Midlands. They provided graphs which showed practice-based learning capacity across the region. This was based on comparing practice-based learning hours with the staff numbers in practice providers. The visitors understood there were 228 responses to the National Education and Training Survey (NETS) in 2024 with learner wellbeing scores falling below the national average across the region. The visitors took this information into account and considered the education provider provided satisfactory evidence of their collaboration with other education providers and practice partners to ensure practice-based learning is available to all learners.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

We have reported on how the provider meets standards, including the areas below, through the [Findings section](#).

Quality theme 1 – the education provider’s reasoning for staffing on the programme

Area for further exploration: The visitors were informed the programme had been allocated a budget to recruit staff before learners begin in January 2026. As part of this, they understood a Lecturer was set to start in mid-November 2025, and they would also be the Placement Lead. We understood three visiting lecturers were contracted annually and had completed a full induction and mandatory training. There was also a team of casual workers who were employed by the session for specialist teaching.

The visitors however were unsure how the programme would be supported, especially in cases of absence. They were unclear about the rationale for the programme’s staffing level. As a result, we were unsure whether staffing levels and arrangements are sufficient and sustainable to deliver an effective programme. We therefore sought more information about this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding. Subsequently, we also explored this by meeting with the programme team to gain clarification on the theme.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider confirmed the programme had been allocated core staffing of two full-time occupational therapy staff. This consisted of a Course Lead, and a Lecturer. The visitors understood the Course Lead led the programme, managed admissions, and attended education provider-wide meetings. The Lecturer focused on practice-based learning delivery. In addition, the education provider explained the programme team had a support structure of three layers:

- Visiting lecturers;
- Casual lecturers and professionals from other disciplines; and
- Wider allied health profession community and public health staff.

Occupational therapy modules were delivered by occupational therapy staff to ensure discipline-specific expertise. The education provider explained shared modules with learners from other professions had leads and staffing in place and they planned to review all modules to ensure appropriate professional input in both design and delivery.

The education provider confirmed staff roles were subject to a workload allocation model (WAM). The visitors understood recruitment was focused on ensuring a range of occupational therapy specialties were represented. The education provider explained all occupational therapy staff were HCPC-registered, and senior roles required academic experience in higher education. Dissertation supervision was based on expertise and could include dual supervisors from outside occupational therapy. The broader team, which included staff from the HCPC approved MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) programme, included experienced HCPC registrants

and subject specialists. The visitors also recognised educators from other professions (e.g. radiography, dietetics, and physiotherapy) contributed to interprofessional modules.

The visitors recognised the programme worked to a Student-Staff Ratio (SSR) of 1:15. The education provider explained the first cohort was limited to 15 learners to manage workload and ensure quality. They added staffing levels were reviewed regularly and an increase in learner numbers would prompt a business case for additional staff. The programme had the potential to add staff based on headcount and workload mapping. Monthly meetings ensured the programme team monitored issues and allocated support funds as needed. The Workload Management System tracked scholarly time and flagged any need for additional staff while contingency measures could be applied for to cover staff absence, and these included the use of visiting lecturers.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence demonstrated the rationale for the programme's staffing level. They were also reassured how key programme components would be supported. They had no further questions in this area and considered the standard to be met.

Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
 - The education provider explained how the programme is a two-year, full-time pre-registration MSc that integrates practice-based learning. Information about the programme is found on the education provider's website and through discussion with the programme team. The education provider also runs a multiprofessional selection day which includes a campus tour and details including expectations of the programme. This day is facilitated by practicing occupational therapists and education staff. The visitors recognised this allowed the education provider the necessary opportunities to make an informed choice about who to offer places on the proposed programme to.
 - The visitors recognised applicants must hold a 2:1 honours degree in a relevant discipline, with individual assessments made where necessary. They noted the programme is not available to international learners. Applicants are expected to demonstrate interest and commitment to the profession. An interview is part of the selection process, providing an opportunity for applicants to engage with the programme team and ask questions.
 - The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
 - The visitors understood the programme team was in place. Professional Academic Leads oversee sections of the programme and ensure it meets quality standards in teaching, learning, and assessment.
 - The programme team maintains regular formal and informal communication with practice partners through stakeholder events and discussions with occupational therapy practitioners. The education provider explained they are actively involved in the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System, who host an occupational therapy-focused meeting involving discussions on capacity and forecasting. Practice partners were part of the initial development group. The Practice Lead meets regularly with NHS Trust AHP Education Leads to discuss practice-based learning. New relationships are being built with charitable and independent sector providers to offer practice-based learning opportunities.
 - Formal agreements will be in place for all practice-based learning sites. Annual scoping identifies each site's learner capacity, and this forms the basis for practice-based learning planning. The visitors noted regular departmental audits assess staffing and service activity to ensure learners receive appropriate experiences and support from qualified practitioners.

- The education provider confirmed they have support from five local NHS Trusts and Birmingham City Council, with partnership agreements aligned to NHS England Education Contracts. These partners provide comprehensive practice-based learning across diverse areas such as physical and mental health, and community settings. Leadership practice-based learning and a learner-led integrated care environment are established. The education provider explained how emerging practice-based learning areas for year 2 learners include public health, global health, and telehealth. The programme supports both traditional and long-arm supervision, aligned with the RCOT's standards. Long-arm supervision may involve registrant visiting lecturers who are experienced educators, often part-time in trusted partner organisations. The Course Lead oversees long-arm supervision, ensuring alignment with programme and professional expectations.
- The visitors were informed experienced educators from other professions contribute to interprofessional modules. The programme has access to three Visiting Lecturers with annual contracts and mandatory training requirements, and casual workers employed by session for specialist input. As discussed in [quality theme 1](#), the visitors recognised the education provider's reasoning for staffing. For example, the Workload Management System tracks scholarly time and flags any need for additional staff.
- Recruitment for the programme team has focused on ensuring a range of specialities are represented. Occupational therapy staff appointments have been made with consideration of professional practice and specialist expertise, including mental health, dementia and frailty, public and global health, and physical health. The programme team are experienced in supporting learners from a range of backgrounds educationally and other diversities. Visiting lecturers and casual workers are appointed to cover specialist curriculum areas. Senior Lecturers and Course Leads have substantial academic experience in higher education. The education provider explained the team includes a diverse mix of HCPC registrants, subject specialists, and experienced higher education professionals.
- The visitors noted learners have access to a variety of on-campus skills and simulation environments to support practice-based learning. For example, home settings, kitchens, adult and child ward spaces, and areas for basic life support and moving and handling training. Library resources include both physical and online access, with features like live chat support, ebooks, ejournals, and article requests. IT facilities and a range of teaching spaces, from lecture theatres to tutorial rooms, are available. Each module has a dedicated Moodle page, the provider's Virtual Learning Environment. This offers 24 / 7 access to programme materials, discussion forums, e-learning resources, and self-assessment tools.
- Learners are taught how to raise and escalate concerns through standardised procedures supported by the practice-based learning

organisation. Programme team members help learners throughout this process. The visitors noted this approach is consistent across the faculty and is overseen by the Lead for Practice from the College of Health and Care Professions.

- The visitors were informed that successful completion of the programme is required to be eligible to apply for HCPC registration. This process is consistent with all HCPC-approved pre-registration MSc programmes offered by the education provider.
- The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
 - The programme includes mapping to the HCPC standards of proficiency (SOPs). The visitors noted this details in which module and learning outcome each SOP is taught with the Module Specifications including information about learning outcomes.
 - The visitors saw HCPC standards of conduct performance and ethics (SCPEs) and the expectations of professional behaviour are referenced within the learning outcomes and indicative content of modules. For example, learning outcome three, in module Evidence Based Professional Practice is, 'Critically evaluate the role of the profession and opportunities to influence practice within the wider context of health and social care provision.'
 - The visitors noted the programme focuses on developing clinical reasoning, professional values, evidence-based practice, and the ability to work across diverse settings. It also supports learners in gaining the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required for safe, effective, and person-centred care.
 - The education provider explained how the programme has been designed in collaboration with current practitioners to reflect contemporary practice and promote evidence-based approaches that support best practice. The visitors were satisfied the curriculum demonstrates this alignment and the programme will undergo an annual quality review to ensure content and delivery remain current.
 - The education provider informed us the programme uses a modular structure with alternating blocks of academic study and clinical practice across both years. Academic blocks include skills and simulation-based learning to reinforce the connection between theory and practice and ensure learners are appropriately supported before going into practice-based learning.
 - The visitors understood learners need to reflect on practice experiences during academic sessions.
 - Practice assessment is integrated into module assessment, requiring learners to pass both theoretical and practical components.
 - The education provider explained academic elements are delivered primarily on campus through a blended learning approach, combining face-to-face and online sessions. Their skills and simulation facilities help support active teaching methods and they use Moodle to guide

learners in pre- and post-session activities. Learners participate in small, discursive classes and larger interprofessional sessions. The programme emphasises flipped classroom methods, problem-based learning, and independent study to promote deep understanding of the evidence base.

- The visitors considered this is a level 7 master's programme, designed to develop learners into independent, reflective, and autonomous practitioners. Learners are supported in building critical thinking and synthesis skills. A variety of assessments are used to encourage reflective thinking and the development of new ideas with clear rationale. In practice-based learning, learners are guided to make decisions and act autonomously through supervised, client-facing activities.
- They also recognised that learners will be required to critically appraise and interpret peer-reviewed evidence to support proposals for service improvement that benefit users. This is explicitly addressed in modules such as Evidence Based Professional Practice, Consolidating Professional Practice, and Healthcare Professional Project, and is embedded throughout the curriculum.
- The education provider provided a copy of the form learners will complete to give consent to participate as service users in academic learning. The visitors were satisfied with this evidence. Learners need to obtain appropriate consent from service users to be involved with their care, for example, introducing themselves as a 'Student Occupational Therapist' to service users, carers and other disciplines throughout the programme.
- The visitors understood attendance is tracked digitally and, where mandatory attendance is required, clearly outlined in the course handbook. If learners are absent, they are contacted in a supportive manner to encourage continued engagement and attendance.
- The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
 - The visitors recognised practice-based learning is evidenced through the course plan. They also noted all NHS practice-based learning is managed through the NHS England Standard Partnership Agreement with non-NHS practice-based learning being managed through College Service Level Agreements.
 - Learners complete 1162 hours of practice-based learning over two years. The education provider explained this equates to nine weeks in year one and 22 weeks in year two. As outlined earlier, practice-based learning is supported and complemented by skills and simulation-based learning within academic learning.
 - The visitors noted the established process within the college which is used to audit and confirm the number of practice-based staff available to support learners. The practice-based learning audits assess the number and whole-time equivalent (WTE) of practice educators relative

to learner practice-based learning and capacity discussions are held across the Integrated Care System (ICS). The education provider requires practice placement providers to confirm the availability of practice based staff as part of the audit process. This is necessary for a practice partner to be approved as a practice-based learning setting for learners. The Placement Lead has oversight, and monitors, this process.

- The visitors understood practice-based learning audits assess the knowledge, skills and experience of Practice Educators and whether they are on the relevant part of the Register. Practice Educators must have completed Clinical Educator training.
- Practice Educators receive programme-specific training to support them in their role. The visitors recognised there were different sessions for both new practice educators and refresher training and were satisfied with the evidence they saw. Practice educators are supported both formally and informally by the education provider through learning and teaching opportunities. Programme team members are available to provide direct support as needed. The education provider provides regular support sessions, sometimes collaboratively with other education providers.
- The visitors noted learners receive practice-based learning information through handbooks and briefings. Practice educators will be invited to briefings to prepare them for practice-based learning. The education provider will hold programme overview sessions for employers and practice partners, including details on practice requirements, educator roles, and assessment.
- The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
 - The visitors saw the HCPC SOPs mapping document which demonstrated which module and learning outcome assessed each SOP and learning outcome. They were satisfied with this evidence. Module Specifications include information about how the programme assesses each learning outcome.
 - The visitors recognised professionalism is assessed within the programme. For example, learning outcome three, in module Evidence Based Professional Practice, is ‘Critically evaluate the role of the profession and opportunities to influence practice within the wider context of health and social care provision.’ This is assessed through coursework. Learners failing to meet professional behaviour standards may be referred to Fitness to Practise or Academic Misconduct procedures.
 - The programme uses a variety of assessments methods to appropriately measure the learning outcomes. For example, case studies, exams, professional conversations and poster presentations. The visitors noted they are evidenced within the module specifications

and show how the programme ensures learners will be able to demonstrate the SOPs.

- The education provider follows a standard policy for appointing External Examiners to ensure they are suitable for the programme's content and academic level.
- The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Section 5: Referrals

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval, focused review, or performance review process).

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

Recommendations

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- All standards are met, and therefore the programme should be approved

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on approval. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation, and the nature, quality and facilities of the provision.

Education provider	Birmingham City University		
Case reference	CAS-01786-H0F4W7	Lead visitors	Jennifer Caldwell and Joanne Stead (both occupational therapists)
Quality of provision			
<p>Through this assessment, we have noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The areas we explored focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality activity one: The visitors noted the details of staffing, for example the programme had been allocated core staffing of two full-time occupational therapy staff. This consisted of a Course Lead, and a Lecturer. However, we were unsure of the rationale for the staffing on the programme. The education provider informed us of the mechanisms to support staff, for example, we understood staffing was reviewed at each intake. We had no further questions in this area and considered the standard to be met. • The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved. 			
Facilities provided			
<p>Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Senior Lecturer starts on 2 June. An advert for a Lecturer is waiting for approval. Module leads for joint modules include physiotherapists, speech therapists, linguists, therapeutic radiographers and dietitians. There are also a range of team members who deliver and supervise the research elements of the programme. • On campus there are skills and simulation facilities, including a home environment, kitchens, ward spaces, an operating theatre, x-ray rooms, ward spaces, and birthing suites. Learners will have access to a specialist library, IT facilities and teaching spaces, for example lecture theatres, classrooms, and small rooms for individual tutorials. 			
Programmes			
Programme name	Mode of study	First intake date	Nature of provision
MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full Time)	5 January 2026	Taught (HEI)

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
MSc Dietetics (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/01/2018
DipHE Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2001
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/08/2016
DipHE Operating Department Practice (South West)	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/01/2018
BSc Hons Operating Department Practice (South West)	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/01/2020
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice (South West) Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/03/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/03/2021
Dip HE Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2012
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2014
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			02/09/2024
MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2018
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/1993

BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	PT (Part time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/1993
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		30/03/2023
BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer		01/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography	PT (Part time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer		01/09/2022
MSc Therapeutic Radiography (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer		01/01/2023
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			01/09/2001
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	PT (Part time)	Speech and language therapist			01/09/2001
MSc Speech and Language Therapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			01/01/2020
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			09/01/2023
Non-medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals	FT (Full time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/09/2007
Non-medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/09/2007
Principles of Prescribing for Health Care Professionals	FT (Full time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/10/2010
Principles of Prescribing for Health Care Professionals	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/10/2010

Non-Medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Undergraduate)	FT (Full time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Principles of Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Post Graduate)	FT (Full time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Non-Medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Undergraduate)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Non-Medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Undergraduate) (Conversion)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Principles of Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Post Graduate)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Principles of Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Post Graduate) (Conversion)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014