
Approval process report

University of Southampton, Hearing aid dispenser, 2025-26

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve the audiology programme at the University of Southampton. 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.
- Decided all standards are met, and that the programme should be approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- Through this assessment, we determined that quality activity was not required, as the education provider had made a thorough submission.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This is a new approval request.
------------------------	---

Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • whether the programme is approved
----------	--

Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year. • The programme has been approved and will be delivered by the education provider from September 2026.
------------	--

Included within this report

Section 1: About this assessment	3
About us	3
Our standards	3
Our regulatory approach	3
The approval process	3
How we make our decisions	4
The assessment panel for this review	4
Section 2: Institution-level assessment	4
The education provider context	4
Practice areas delivered by the education provider	5
Institution performance data	6
The route through stage 1	8
Admissions	9
Management and governance	11
Quality, monitoring, and evaluation	13
Learners	16
Outcomes from stage 1	19
Section 3: Programme-level assessment	20
Programmes considered through this assessment	20
Stage 2 assessment – provider submission	21
Data / intelligence considered	21
Quality themes identified for further exploration	21
Section 4: Findings	21
Conditions	21
Overall findings on how standards are met	22
Section 5: Referrals	31
Recommendations	31
Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes	31
Assessment panel recommendation	31
Appendix 1 – summary report	32

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 detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme 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:

Robert MacKinnon	Lead visitor, Hearing Aid Dispenser, Clinical Scientist (Audiology)
Claire Langman	Lead visitor, Hearing Aid Dispenser
Saranjit Binning	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 12 HCPC-approved programmes across five professions, however 4 of these programmes are in the process of closing. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1993. This includes three post-registration programmes for independent

prescribing and supplementary prescribing, POM - Administration; and POM - sale / supply (CH) annotations.

The education provider is made up of five faculties all of which have several schools based within them. The HCPC approved programmes are spread across two faculties and three schools. The approved audiology programmes are based in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences in the School of Engineering. The proposed programme will be based in the same School alongside the already approved audiology programmes. The education provider currently offers an MSc programme with clinical placements that is accredited by the AHCS. Feedback from employers, placement providers, and students has highlighted the value of securing HCPC accreditation for hearing aid dispensing, as this would improve graduates' employability upon completion of the programme. This request for approval is therefore submitted to support this.

The approved occupational therapy and physiotherapy programmes are based in the Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences in the School of Health Sciences, while the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and Educational Psychology approved programmes are based in the School of Psychology.

The education provider engaged with the performance review process in the model of quality assurance in 2021. At the meeting in November 2021 the Education and Training Committee agreed that there was sufficient evidence that the standards continued to be met, and the programmes remain approved. The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year

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	Chiropodist / podiatrist	☒ Undergraduate	☐ Postgraduate	1993
	Hearing Aid Dispenser	☒ Undergraduate	☒ Postgraduate	2013
	Occupational therapy	☒ Undergraduate	☒ Postgraduate	1994
	Physiotherapist	☒ Undergraduate	☒ Postgraduate	1994
	Practitioner psychologist	☐ Undergraduate	☒ Postgraduate	1994

Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2011
	Prescription Only Medicine – Sale / Supply			2008

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	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Learner number capacity	761	781	06/11/2025	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.
Learner non-continuation	6%	3%	203-24	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. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests

				the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 2%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there is no impact on the SETs being considered.
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	92%	96%	2023-24	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 2%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there is no impact on the SETs being considered.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2023	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. We did not explore this data point through this

				assessment because there was no impact on the SETs being considered.
Learner satisfaction	82.9%	84.1%	2025	This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has been maintained. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there is no impact on the SETs being considered.
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	5 years	2026-27	The education provider engaged with the HCPC through the performance review process in 2021-22 and a five year monitoring period was agreed. Their next performance review will take place in 2026-27.

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

- NHS England (South East) – we did not receive information which we considered would impact on this assessment.

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 –**
 - The education providers Admissions Policy provides details on the policy and procedure for making information available to applicants and outlines the admissions process. The 'Regulations for Admission to Degree Programmes' document outlines the information the education provider requires to ensure applicants are suitable for a programme. These requirements include Disclosure and Barring Service checks and occupational health screenings.
 - Information relating to specific programmes, such as entry criteria, professional requirements and fees is available on the education providers website.
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - To meet the requirements, applicants are required to provide evidence of the level of their English language, at a minimum of GCSE grade 4 as part of the application process. Alternatively, applicants can provide evidence of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with a score of 6.5 or above and with no component less than 6.
 - As part of the admissions process, applicants will be required to complete an occupational health screening and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate or provide a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. This ensures the applicant's suitability for the programme.
 - From the information provided it is not clear if there are specific health requirements for programmes where applicants are required to do something before they start a programme, for example have certain immunisations and who is responsible for managing any costs attached to this and any other requirements they have to complete as part of the admissions process (SET 2.5). We therefore require further information to understand the processes in place to obtain this information from applicants and will assess this further through stage 2.
 - Institution wide policies will apply to the proposed programme, however there are some policies that require further exploration through stage 2 of this process.
 - For the proposed programme it is not clear if there are specific health requirements for the programme where applicants are required to do something before they start the programme. For example, do applicants need to have certain immunisations and who is responsible

for managing any costs attached to this and any other requirements they have to complete as part of the admissions process. We therefore require further information to understand the processes in place to obtain this information from applicants (SET 2.5). We will explore this through stage 2 of this process.

- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - Information on this area is outlined in the education provider's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy. Applicants are required to complete an application form and submit supporting evidence to be considered for prior learning and experience. Applications are considered on an individual basis and are approved by the Board of Examiners and School Programmes Committee. If applicants are able to demonstrate skills and learning these will be considered through these processes and exemptions will be applied accordingly.
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - When applicants are offered a place on a programme, the education providers Disability and Inclusion team will identify who may require individual support or reasonable adjustments and contact them. This ensures the relevant support is in place when the individual starts the programme.
 - Institution wide policies will apply to the proposed programme, however there are some policies that require further exploration through stage 2 of this process.
 - For the proposed programme, it is not clear what equality and diversity policies are in place in relation to the admissions process. We need to understand how these policies are made available to applicants and what process is in place if an applicant feels they have been unfairly discriminated against (SET 2.7). We will explore this through stage 2 of this process.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: We will assess the following through stage 2 of the process.

- SET 2.5 - from the information provided it is not clear if there are specific health requirements for some programmes where applicants are required to do something before they start a programme, for example have certain immunisations and who is responsible for managing any costs attached to this and any other requirements they have to complete as part of the admissions process. We therefore require further information to understand the processes in place to obtain this information from applicants.
- SET 2.7 - it is not clear what equality and diversity policies are in place in relation to the admissions process. We need to understand how these policies are made available to applicants and what process is in place if an applicant feels they have been unfairly discriminated against.

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The University Council consists of members of staff, independent citizens and two members of the Southampton University Students Union. The Council is further supported by the University Executive Board, The Senate and their sub-committees. The purpose of the Council is to provide overall strategic leadership and governance. It is responsible for managing the financial sustainability and ensuring the buildings and facilities are managed effectively.
 - All new programmes are considered through the strategic business approval process. Through this process they consider the programmes financial viability, possible risks to delivering the programme such as overlap with other programmes or areas and resources required, including staffing levels. When this process is completed, the proposed programme is then considered through the Programme Approval process, where they are checked against academic quality and standards. These processes ensure both environmental and operational factors are considered for all new programmes to ensure they are sustainable and fit for purpose.
 - All approved programmes go through the programme review process, which is used to review programme sustainability. This involves the programme teams and a review panel, which consists of the Associate Dean and two members of academic staff from a different school. As part of this process the programme teams are required to consider the available data and information regarding the programme and assess its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The SWOT analysis is then considered by the review panel where they identify areas where improvements may be required and the actions that should be taken to ensure the future sustainability of programmes.
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - Staff recruitment and appraisal are managed by the human resources teams based within the schools and are overseen by the overarching University recruitment procedures. To ensure staff are appropriately qualified and experienced, job descriptions are created using the criteria for the role and include specific information about the requirements for qualifications, experience and any professional registrations. This approach ensures that staff appointed to deliver the programme are suitably qualified and experienced, and that they receive continued support through the appraisal process to further develop their skills. In doing so, it ensures they maintain the subject

knowledge and expertise required to deliver the programme effectively and provide appropriate support to learners.

- The Programme Lead is responsible for designing and delivering the programme, ensuring it runs smoothly and meets required standards. They report to the Deputy Head of School, who oversees all activities within the school. This structure helps maintain consistent quality, supports good communication, and ensures programmes align with the school's overall goals.
- The Course Description Documents outline the awards that lead to eligibility for admission to the Register. This ensures learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to legibility for admission to the Register. These documents are available for each programme through the Course Search webpage.
- These institution wide policies will apply to the proposed programme, however there are some policies that require further exploration through stage 2 of this process.
- It was unclear what processes were in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users (SET 3.17). We therefore require further information to understand the processes in place and will assess this further through stage 2.
- At the institutional level, it is not clear if the education provider requires the person holding overall professional responsibility for a programme to be appropriately qualified and experienced and registered on the relevant part of the Register (SET 3.3). As such, we will refer this to stage 2 for further exploration.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - Policies and procedures for professional development and annual appraisal are outlined in the Appraisal Policy. The performance of all staff is reviewed each year, during which development needs from the previous year are considered and new development needs are identified. This process supports continuous improvement and ensures staff receive the guidance and development they need to deliver programmes.
 - These institution wide policies will apply to the proposed programme, however there are some policies that require further exploration through stage 2 of this process.
 - From the information provided it was not clear how the education provider ensures and supports staff, sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators to keep their professional and academic skills up to date (SET 3.11). We therefore need to explore this further through stage 2.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**

- The education provider has described how all partnerships relevant to the HCPC-accredited programmes are managed at school level, with most of these partnerships supporting practice-based learning.
- We do not have a clear understanding of which partnerships are managed at the institutional level and the processes used to develop, approve, monitor, and maintain these partnerships. Further detail is required to understand how these partnerships are overseen to ensure programme sustainability, and how institutional processes align with or support those operating at school level (SET 3.1). We will refer this to stage 2 for further exploration.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The following will be assessed further through stage 2 of the process:

- SET 3.1 - We do not have a clear understanding of which partnerships are managed at the institutional level and those overseen at school level, or what processes are used to develop, approve, monitor, and maintain these partnerships. Further information is therefore required to understand how these partnerships are overseen to ensure programme sustainability and how the processes align with or support those operating at school level.
- SET 3.3 – It is not clear if the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and registered on the relevant part of the Register.
- SET 3.11 - From the information provided it was not clear how the education provider ensured and supported staff, sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators to keep their professional and academic skills up to date.
- SET 3.17 – It was not clear what processes were in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**
 - The education provider has several policies and procedures in place to manage and monitor academic quality. These include the Approval of new programmes and review of existing programmes, Annual Programme Monitoring module reviews, Student Staff Liaison Committees and School Programme Committees. These policies and procedures form part of the education providers Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Framework which all programmes are required to comply with this. All these policies are accessible via the Quality Handbook.
 - All programmes go through the Annual Monitoring process. As part of this process, programme teams are required to produce and submit programme overview reports, which provide a reflective evaluation of

programme performance and learner outcomes. These reports are then reviewed by the Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee (AQSS), which provides oversight, identifies areas of good practice, highlights risks or concerns, and ensures that appropriate actions are taken to maintain and enhance academic quality. This review process supports continuous improvement and ensures programmes continue to meet regulatory requirements and the needs of learners.

- External examiners are involved with all programmes at all levels and provide input into all aspects of the assessments including the practice elements. Their input ensures fair and transparent decisions are made in relation to awards and progression.
- These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
 - Responsibility for placement quality is held at programme level. Placement quality is monitored and reported through the Audiology Education Board, with outcomes and updates also reported to the School of Engineering's Programme Committee (SPC).
 - We do not have a clear understanding of how practice quality is overseen at the institutional level. Further information is therefore needed on the processes and quality assurance mechanisms in place to quality assure and monitor practice settings during stage 2 of the process. This includes how risks are identified and managed, how concerns are raised by learners or placement providers and addressed (SET 5.3).
 - From the information provided it is not clear how the education provider ensures practice-based learning settings are suitable and support safe and effective learning. Further information is therefore required to understand the processes and quality checks in place to ensure the practice learning environment is safe and supportive for learners and service users. We will assess this further through stage 2 (SET 5.4).
 - From the information provided, it was not clear how the education provider ensures practice educators receive regular training that is appropriate for their role, learners' needs, and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme. We will assess this further through stage 2 (SET 5.7).
 - From the information provided, it was not clear how learners and practice educators were provided with the required information in order to be prepared for specific practice-based learning opportunities. For example, we could not see a clear process where names and details of learners or practice educators were provided, placement details, timing and length of practice-based learning and practical details such as location of practice-based learning. To understand the process, we will assess this further through stage 2 of the process (SET 5.8).

- Institution wide policies apply to the proposed programme, however there are some policies that require further exploration through stage 2 of this process.
- **Learner involvement –**
 - The education provider encourages learners to participate in the development and delivery of their programme by offering opportunities to contribute. This engagement takes place through established mechanisms such as Staff–Student Liaison Committees, course representatives, and module evaluations.
 - The education provider recognises the value of gathering regular learner feedback, as it helps to identify areas of good practice, highlight emerging concerns and determine whether immediate or longer-term actions are required. Learners are therefore able to provide feedback through the module and programme feedback process. These processes ensure that learners are involved in maintaining the quality and effectiveness of their programmes to enhance their learning experience.
 - It was unclear what the education provider's expectations were regarding learner attendance, or which elements of the programme were considered mandatory. Further clarification is needed on how these requirements are communicated to learners and what systems or processes are used to monitor attendance. Without this information, it is difficult to understand how the education provider ensures learners engage appropriately with the programme and meet the necessary standards. We will assess this further through stage 2 (SET 4.11)
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
 - There is a Service User Involvement strategy for Audiology programmes, which is overseen and monitored by the Service User Involvement Lead for the audiology programmes. The Service User Involvement Strategy outlines how service users and carers are involved with programmes, such as programme planning, development, admissions, teaching and assessment.

It was not clear what processes and policies there were in place for obtaining appropriate consent for service users and learners (SET 4.10). We will assess this further through stage 2 of this process.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The following will be assessed further through stage 2 of the process:

- SET 4.10 – It was not clear what processes and policies there were in place for obtaining appropriate consent for service users and learners.
- SET 4.11 - It was not clear what the education provider's expectations were regarding learner attendance or which elements of the programme were considered mandatory. Further clarification is needed on how these requirements are communicated to learners and what

systems or processes are used to monitor attendance. Without this information, it is difficult to understand how the provider ensures learners engage appropriately with the programme and meet the necessary standards.

- SET 5.3 –We do not have a clear understanding of how practice quality is overseen at the institutional level. Further information is therefore needed on the institutional processes and quality assurance mechanisms in place to quality assure and monitor practice settings. This includes how risks are identified and managed, how concerns are raised by learners or placement providers and addressed. We also need to understand how institutional oversight aligns with or supports processes in place at school and programme level.
- SET 5.4 - Further information is required to understand the processes and quality checks in place to ensure the practice learning environment is safe and supportive for learners and service users.
- SET 5.7 – It was not clear how the education provider ensures practice educators receive regular training that is appropriate for their role, learners' needs, and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.
- SET 5.8 - It was not clear how learners and practice educators were provided with the required information in order to be prepared for specific practice-based learning opportunities. For example, we could not see a clear process where names and details of learners or practice educators were provided, placement details, timing and length of practice-based learning and practical details such as location of practice-based learning.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
 - Learners have access to a wide range of services to support their wellbeing and academic needs through the Student Hub, including Wellbeing Support, Disability Support, and Dyslexia and Study Support. In addition, every learner is allocated a Personal Academic Tutor who provides both pastoral and academic guidance. This includes directing learners to specialised services when needed, such as mental health support, financial advice, or academic skills support.
 - The Regulations Governing Student Complaints 2025-26 are accessible to all learners who want to make a complaint. These regulations are available through the education providers website and help learners understand the procedures, timescales and support available throughout the complaints process. By making this information easily accessible, the education provider is supporting learners with a fair, consistent and clearly structured approach to resolving issues.

- These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
 - The University Policy and Guidance for applicants with criminal records policies applies to all applicants and learners and requires them to complete criminal conviction checks. These checks take place at the admissions stage and thereafter learners are required to complete ongoing self-declaration of suitability each academic year.
 - Suitability concerns are considered through the Regulations Governing Fitness to Practise. Concerns considered through this process include those relating to learners' health, behaviour and conduct. The regulations outline the procedures for raising or reporting concerns and describe the processes used to determine whether learners remain suitable to continue on their programme. Any concerns relating to a learner's suitability to practise or placement setting are also considered through this policy.
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
 - Professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements interprofessional learning are identified and confirmed during programme approval and review. Ongoing compliance with these requirements is monitored through the relevant School's Programme Committee.
 - Although these requirements are confirmed during programme approval, there appears to be no formal interprofessional learning (IPL) policy at either institutional or school level to outline expectations in this area. Further clarification is needed to understand how the education provider ensures meaningful interprofessional learning opportunities are planned, delivered, and monitored across the programme (SET 4.9).
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The education provider's Strategic Plan demonstrates a commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across all aspects of the learner experience. It highlights the importance of creating a diverse, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where all learners feel valued and respected. This commitment ensures all learners are treated fairly, equally and enables them to fully engage with their programme.
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The following will be assessed further through stage 2 of the process:

- SET 4.9 - Although the interprofessional learning requirements are confirmed during programme approval, there appears to be no formal interprofessional learning (IPL) policy at either institutional or school level to outline expectations in this area. Further clarification is needed to understand how the education provider ensures meaningful interprofessional learning opportunities are planned, delivered, and monitored across the programme.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - The Quality Handbook sets out the policies and procedures for marking, feedback, and moderation, helping to ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency across all programmes.
 - The Board of Examiners plays a key role in scrutinising all assessment outcomes to confirm that marking and moderation processes have been applied appropriately and in accordance with institutional policy. This is further supported by the Policy and Procedures for Boards of Examiners, which provides clear guidance on the Board's responsibilities and decision-making processes.
 - External Examiners are involved with all elements of assessments and provide independent input into the assessments to ensure quality and academic standards are maintained.
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme.
- **Progression and achievement –**
 - The regulations clearly set out the requirements for progression at each stage of the programme, ensuring learners understand what is needed to advance. Assessment requirements for each module are provided within the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), giving learners accessible and detailed guidance on what is expected of them throughout their studies.
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme
- **Appeals –**
 - The Regulations Governing Academic Appeals by Students applies to all programmes and allows learners to submit an appeal relating to a decision that has been made regarding their progression, which could include challenging the mark they have received for a module.
 - These policies are institution wide and apply to the proposed programme

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

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.

- SET 2.5 - From the information provided it is not clear if there are specific health requirements for some programmes where applicants are required to do something before they start a programme, for example have certain immunisations and who is responsible for managing any costs attached to this and any other requirements they have to complete as part of the admissions process. We therefore require further information to understand the processes in place to obtain this information from applicants.
- SET 2.7 - it is not clear what equality and diversity policies are in place in relation to the admissions process. We need to understand how these policies are made available to applicants and what process is in place if an applicant feels they have been unfairly discriminated against.
- SET 3.1 - We do not have a clear understanding of which partnerships are managed at the institutional level and those overseen at school level, or what processes are used to develop, approve, monitor, and maintain these partnerships. Further information is therefore required to understand how the institution oversees these partnerships to ensure programme sustainability and how the processes align with or support those operating at school level.
- SET 3.3 – It is not clear if the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and registered on the relevant part of the Register. We will refer this to stage 2 for further exploration.
- SET 3.11 - From the information provided it was not clear how the education provider ensured and supported staff, sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators to keep their professional and academic skills up to date.
- SET 3.17 – It was not clear what processes were in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.
- SET 4.9 - Although the interprofessional learning requirements are confirmed during programme approval, there appears to be no formal interprofessional learning (IPL) policy at either institutional or school level to outline expectations in this area. Further clarification is needed to understand how the education provider ensures meaningful interprofessional learning opportunities are planned, delivered, and monitored across the programme.
- SET 4.10 – It was not clear what processes and policies there were in place for obtaining appropriate consent for service users and learners.
- SET 4.11 - It was not clear what the education provider's expectations were regarding learner attendance or which elements of the programme were considered mandatory. Further clarification is needed on how these requirements are communicated to learners and what systems or processes are used to monitor attendance. Without this information, it is difficult to

understand how the provider ensures learners engage appropriately with the programme and meet the necessary standards.

- SET 5.3 – We do not have a clear understanding of how practice quality is overseen at the institutional level. Further information is therefore needed on the institutional processes and quality assurance mechanisms in place to quality assure and monitor practice settings. This includes how risks are identified and managed, how concerns are raised by learners or placement providers and addressed. We also need to understand how institutional oversight aligns with or supports processes in place at school and programme level.
- SET 5.4 - Further information is required to understand the processes and quality checks in place to ensure the practice learning environment is safe and supportive for learners and service users.
- SET 5.7 – It was not clear how the education provider ensures practice educators receive regular training that is appropriate for their role, learners' needs, and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.
- SET 5.8 - It was not clear how learners and practice educators were provided with the required information in order to be prepared for specific practice-based learning opportunities. For example, we could not see a clear process where names and details of learners or practice educators were provided, placement details, timing and length of practice-based learning and practical details such as location of practice-based learning.

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

- The current programme team is already established and actively teaching on the approved BSc (Hons) and MSci Audiology programmes, and this existing staff resource will directly support the delivery of the proposed programme.
- The proposed programme will be delivered at the Highfield campus, where the Audiology Skills Lab is also located. This lab provides learners with opportunities to practise and develop their clinical skills. In addition to the skills lab, learners will have access to a range of simulation equipment to support their practical learning. As the education provider already delivers established audiology programmes, all necessary resources and facilities are already in place to support the new programme.

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 Audiology with clinical placement	FT (Full time)	Hearing aid dispenser	20 learners, 1 cohort	21/09/2026
---------------------------------------	----------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	------------

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

- NHS England (South East) – we did not receive information which we considered would impact on this assessment.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. The education provider's submission demonstrated all standards were met and therefore no quality activities were required.

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

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**
 - The education provider clarified the programme leads to a Masters level qualification and fully meets the requirements for professional registration. The curriculum has been mapped against the HCPC Standards of Education and Training and the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) for Hearing aid dispensers, providing assurance that learners will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours required for safe and effective practice on registration.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the information provided and considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions**
 - Visitors confirmed the selection and entry criteria were clear and set at an appropriate level for the proposed programme. The entry criteria were available on the education provider's website and accessible to applicants.
 - The evidence demonstrated that applicants were required to meet specific academic entry requirements, including a minimum 2:1 degree classification in a relevant discipline such as a physical, biological, life or behavioural science, or engineering subject. This provided assurance that applicants had an appropriate academic background to undertake Masters level study.
 - The 'Information for Applicants' document provided clear information about the interview process where they explored the applicants understanding of the profession and their ability to articulate the knowledge, skills and values required to practise audiology.
 - Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to applicants complying with any health requirements (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 2.5). They noted the 'Occupational Health Check guidance' confirmed that places on the pre-registration programmes were offered subject to satisfactory occupational health check clearance, which was a condition that had to be met before enrolment. As part of these checks, applicants were required to complete an occupational health check questionnaire, provide evidence of immunisations and compliance with vaccination requirements. The guidance also explained how applicants may incur additional costs if further medical information was required as part of the process. Visitors were satisfied there was clear information outlining the occupational health check requirements, including immunisations.

- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to the equality, diversity and inclusion policies (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 2.7). They acknowledged the education provider's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, which was demonstrated through the 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy' and the 'Inclusion and Respectful Behaviour Policy'. It was noted the 'Admissions Policy' was available publicly and signposted applicants to relevant policies and complaints procedures. In addition to this, the 'Regulations Governing Complaints from Applicants Policy' is a mechanism through which applicants can raise concerns regarding admissions decisions or unfair treatment. Visitors were satisfied this approach would enable applicants to raise concerns appropriately.
- The visitors were satisfied with the information provided and considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership**
 - There is clear evidence of regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers. The Placement Handbook outlines ongoing engagement between the Audiology Placement Lead, practice education providers and placement supervisors through scheduled meetings and routine communication via email and individual contact. The handbook also details formal midpoint and end-of-placement review processes, enabling practice education providers and placement supervisors to provide structured feedback on the learning experience and placement quality. Feedback is reviewed by the education provider and issues are addressed accordingly. The Audiology Education Board also considers how the education provider engages and collaborates with practice education providers. Visitors found the documentation demonstrated established mechanisms for continuous communication and collaborative quality enhancement processes involving both the education provider and practice education providers.
 - Visitors noted the education provider maintained oversight of placement availability and capacity through a centrally maintained placement capacity spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was used to record details of current, previous and potential practice education providers and included details of placement capacity and the status of each opportunity and was monitored by the Audiology Placement Lead. The Audiology Education Board Minutes also provided evidence that placement capacity was discussed regularly where current and future capacity were considered.
 - The MSc Audiology with Clinical Placement Programme Specification provided details of the number of staff involved with delivering the programme. Visitors acknowledged there were an adequate number of staff to support the programme, which included five clinically qualified members of staff and three additional research academic staff. There was a range of relevant clinical, academic and research expertise to support the delivery of the programme.

- Visitors acknowledged the staff delivering the programme had the relevant specialist knowledge and expertise. They noted there were five members of staff who were HCPC registered clinical scientists, which included the programme lead. In addition to this, there was a member of staff registered as a Hearing Aid Dispenser with the HCPC who was responsible for leading on the Hearing Aid Aptitude Test programme.
- We noted learners had access to a range of appropriate learning resources across both academic and clinical settings. Learning materials were provided through various digital platforms such as Microsoft Teams, SharePoint and Blackboard, with module information available online. It was noted the programme was also supported by a dedicated audiology clinical skills laboratory. In addition to this, learners would have access to the library resources, which would include audiology textbooks, journals and digital learning materials.
- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to partnerships and how the institution oversees these partnerships (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 3.1). They acknowledged the partnerships relevant to this programme were managed at School level. The 'Audiology Clinical Placement Handbook and Audiology Placement Provider Information Form' demonstrated there were clear processes for the development, approval and re-approval of placement partnerships. These included initial discussions with prospective placement providers, learning environment audits and placement visits. In addition to this, we noted there were clear arrangements in place to monitor and maintain placement partnerships. These included regular communication between the education provider and practice education providers and placement reviews. Visitors considered the evidence provided demonstrated appropriate institutional and school level processes were in place to develop, approve, monitor and maintain placement partnerships and support the sustainability of the programme.
- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 3.3). They acknowledged the programme lead was registered with the HCPC as a Clinical Scientist and had clinical, educational and programme leadership experience. It was noted the programme would be further supported by a registered Hearing Aid Dispenser who would contribute to the delivery of the programme. This would provide additional professional input into the programme, which was relevant to hearing aid dispensing practice. Visitors were satisfied the programme lead had the necessary academic, professional and clinical expertise to lead the programme.
- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to how staff, sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators were supported to keep their professional and academic skills up to date (in

relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 3.11). They acknowledged there were formal mechanisms in place to support and monitor the continuing professional and academic development of educators. It was noted the education provider supported professional development opportunities and educational enhancement activities, which were outlined in the 'Framework for Education'. This included resources, guidance and training provided through the Centre for Higher Education Practice and support for attending conferences and scholarly activities. In addition to this, it was noted clinically registered educators were required to maintain their professional registration and undertake continuing professional development in accordance with the requirements of their professional regulator. Visitors were satisfied there were appropriate and effective arrangements in place to support the continuing professional and academic development of educators involved in the programme.

- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to raising concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 3.17). They noted the 'Audiology Clinical Placement Handbook' provided details of the process learners should follow if they have concerns regarding patient safety or the wellbeing of service users. Learners are advised to raise concerns with their Audiology Placement Lead and personal academic tutor. Alongside this they are also advised to follow the placement provider's whistleblowing procedures for serious public interest concerns. In addition to this, learners are informed of their responsibility to raise concerns prior to commencing placement through the placement preparation sessions. Visitors were satisfied and acknowledged there were effective processes in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.
- The visitors were satisfied with the information provided and considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery**
 - The learning outcomes were mapped against the SOPs mapping document and outlined in the module descriptors. The mapping demonstrated all SOPs were addressed across the curriculum through a combination of academic study, clinical skills development and practice-based learning. The mapping also identified where individual standards were assessed through module learning outcomes, placement learning outcomes and the Individual Record of Clinical Practice.
 - Visitors confirmed the professional behaviours and standards of conduct, performance and ethics were embedded throughout the programme and assessed at multiple stages of the programme. Professional behaviours and standards of conduct, performance and ethics were mapped against the Audiology Placement and Clinical Audiology modules. In addition to this, the Individual Record of Clinical

Practice provided a structured approach for assessing professional behaviours in practice, which included communication, accountability decision making and adherence to professional standards.

- The philosophy, core values, professional skills, and knowledge base of the profession were clearly embedded within both the design and delivery of the programme, as evidenced through the module descriptors and the Framework for Education. In addition, the curriculum was informed by current British Society of Audiology guidance and incorporated experiential and case-based learning methodologies, enabling learners to apply professional knowledge and critical thinking to real life clinical scenarios.
- Visitors noted there were a range of processes to review and update the curriculum to ensure it remained up to date and relevant. This included annual programme review, engagement with placement providers and external examiners. These processes introduced a level of flexibility within the curriculum, enabling the education provider to implement regulatory changes efficiently and respond to learner needs and make improvements.
- Visitors acknowledged there was clear evidence within the module descriptors that theory and practice were integrated across the programme. This integration was achieved by theoretical content being delivered through independent study and tutorials which was closely aligned with practical teaching sessions. For example, topics including otoscopy, pure tone audiometry, tympanometry and acoustic reflex testing were introduced through directed learning activities and reinforced through associated practical skills sessions and tutorials.
- There was evidence of a variety of learning and teaching methods being used to deliver the learning outcomes. These were outlined in the programme specification and consisted of small group tutorials practical sessions, practical demonstrations, case studies, guided and self-directed study, clinical observations and practice-based learning.
- Visitors noted the design of the programme provided learners with the opportunities to develop both autonomous learning and reflective thinking throughout their academic and clinical training. A key component of this was the placement module where learners were required to produce a reflective account based on a clinical placement experience. Through their placement, learners were also required to take ownership of their learning, identify ongoing learning needs, evaluate progress towards learning outcomes and develop reflective practice skills through reflective accounts.
- Visitors noted throughout the programme there was a commitment to developing evidence-based practice. Learners were required to locate, critically appraise, synthesise and apply research evidence to clinical decision-making and professional practice throughout the programme. There was evidence of evidence-based practice being embedded in the Clinical Audiology, Paediatric Audiology and Research Project

modules where learners were required to critically evaluate and analyse evidence.

- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to ensuring interprofessional learning opportunities were planned, delivered, and monitored across the programme (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 4.9). They noted there were interprofessional learning opportunities available through the Paediatric Audiology and Fundamental of Auditory Implants modules. These modules enabled learners to work with a range of professions, including speech and language therapists, ear, nose and throat specialists and practitioner psychologists. It was noted through placement learners would work alongside medical trainees and trainee clinical scientists. Visitors were satisfied there were appropriate opportunities available to learners.
- Visitors noted the additional information supplied regarding obtaining consent from service users and learners (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 4.10). They noted the Audiology Clinical Placement handbook contained a section on service user and carer consent, which outlined the requirements and expectations of learners obtaining consent. The NHS Placement Learning Charter was also included in the handbook, which stated it was the learners responsibility to obtain consent during placement. Prior to placement, learners were taught the importance of obtaining consent and were required to demonstrate this through practical teaching sessions, where they had to obtain verbal consent from their peers before they undertook role play. Visitors were satisfied these arrangements were appropriate for obtaining appropriate consent from both service users and learners.
- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to how attendance requirements were communicated to learners (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 4.11). We noted the mandatory attendance requirements were communicated to learners through module documentation, the clinical placement handbook, placement preparation sessions and monitored through the online platform Myengagement. Visitors were satisfied these arrangements ensured learners understood which elements of the programme were mandatory and provided mechanisms for monitoring engagement throughout the programme.
- The visitors were satisfied with the information provided and considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning**
 - Visitors acknowledged the information supplied in the Audiology Placement module specification where it was clear practice-based learning was embedded throughout the programme. They noted learners were introduced to practice-based learning through simulated clinical activities within the Audiology Clinical Skills Laboratory. Learners were also required to undertake observational clinical

experiences across a range of audiology settings prior to commencing their 40 week clinical placement.

- Visitors noted the structure and duration of practice-based learning was appropriate to enable learners to meet the SOPs and achieve the learning outcomes. This was outlined in the Placement Handbook, which also provided details of the expectations for attendance, duration, supervision arrangements and assessments.
- There were a range of practice-based learning opportunities offered that varied between NHS Trusts and private organisations which enabled learners to meet the learning outcomes. This ensured learners were provided with access to a range of settings where they were able to work with different client groups.
- All placement providers go through a process where they are approved and through this, the education provider reviews the staffing resources available to support practice-based learning. The Audiology Placement Provider Information Form requires placement providers to detail the staff involved in supervising learners, including their professional registration status, qualifications, experience, and relevant training. Alongside this all practice supervisors are required to complete training delivered by the education provider before undertaking supervisory responsibilities. The education provider has evidenced staffing arrangements are considered during both the initial approval process and ongoing placement monitoring activities. This provides further assurance that placement providers maintain sufficient numbers of suitably qualified and experienced staff to effectively support learners throughout their practice-based learning experience.
- Visitors noted all experienced practice educators were also required to undertake updates where necessary. Furthermore, practice educators supervising learners were registered Hearing Aid Dispensers with the HCPC and some practice educators within the NHS Trusts held dual registration as Clinical scientists and Hearing aid dispenses. This provided assurance that practice educators were suitably qualified and adequately prepared to support safe and effective learning and assessment in practice settings.
- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to the institutional processes and quality assurance mechanisms in place to quality assure and monitor practice settings (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 5.3). We noted the education provider's Placement Policy clearly sets out the arrangements for the approval, monitoring and quality assurance of practice-based learning. At an institutional level, the policy establishes the minimum requirements for all placements and identifies designated staff responsible for the approval, organisation, monitoring and evaluation of placement activities. It also details the processes for identifying and managing risk, including placement approval procedures, health and safety requirements, and the review of concerns relating to the suitability of placement providers. At programme level, the Audiology Clinical

Placement Handbook demonstrates how these institutional requirements are operationalised. Placement providers are subject to a formal approval process that includes engagement with the placement team, audits of the learning environment, and reviews of staffing and supervision arrangements. Visitors acknowledged there were a range of quality assurance and monitoring mechanisms in place, including learner briefing sessions, midpoint and end-of-placement evaluations, individual meetings with learners and practice educators, and the collection of annual feedback. Visitors were assured that effective processes were in place for the approval, monitoring and quality assurance of practice-based learning.

- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to the processes and quality checks in place to ensure the practice learning environment is safe and supportive for learners and service users (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 5.4). They noted there were a range of measures designed to ensure practice-based learning took place in safe and supportive environments for both learners and service users. This included preparing learners for placements, undertaking risk assessments for all placement providers and training practice educators to ensure responsibilities and expectations were clear, including raising concerns about learner wellbeing conduct or professional practice. Visitors were satisfied there were appropriate processes in place to ensure the practice learning environments were safe and supportive for learners and service users.
- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to practice educators receiving regular training (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 5.7). They noted practice educators were required to undertake training provided by the education provider prior to supervising learners. This was reinforced further in the Audiology Placement Provider Information Form, which also specified that only appropriately trained staff may undertake sign-off responsibilities. The form also required placement providers to record and notify the education provider of staff training completed, which was used as a mechanism for monitoring compliance. Visitors were satisfied practice educators undertook training appropriate to their role and that there were mechanisms in place to support and monitor the training.
- Visitors noted the additional information supplied in relation to how learners and practice educators were provided with the required information (in relation to the referral from stage 1 regarding SET 5.8). They noted learners and practice educators were provided with information in advance of practice based learning. The education provider maintains placement information through the InPlace placement management system and placement capacity records, enabling placement allocations and placement provider information to be coordinated and monitored. Learners are also required to attend compulsory briefing sessions prior to commencing placement where they receive information regarding placement timings, duration,

expectations and practical arrangements. Following allocation, learners receive confirmation of their placement provider and practice educator and are required to contact the placement provider to confirm practical arrangements including location, working hours and first day attendance arrangements. Practice educators are also provided with information regarding upcoming learner placements through direct communication from the placement team. Visitors were satisfied learners and practice educators received the information they required in a timely manner to prepare for practice-based learning.

- The visitors were satisfied with the information provided and considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 6: Assessment**

- The programme's assessment strategy demonstrated an integrated approach to ensuring that only learners who achieve the HCPC SOPs required for registration as a Hearing Aid Dispenser successfully complete the programme. Assessments were undertaken through a combination of academic, practical skills and practice-based assessments, together with an end-of-placement interview. This enabled learners to demonstrate achievement across the full range of knowledge, skills, behaviours and competencies required for professional registration, providing assurance that graduates have met the standards necessary for entry to the Register as a Hearing Aid Dispenser.
- Assessment throughout the programme ensures that learners demonstrate the professional behaviours required of a registered Hearing Aid Dispenser, including adherence to the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics. These behaviours are assessed through both academic and practice-based learning activities. Assessment methods require learners to demonstrate technical competence alongside professional judgement, ethical practice, effective communication, risk management, confidentiality, accountability and the delivery of person-centred care.
- Assessment methods across the programme are appropriate to, and effective in, measuring the intended learning outcomes. All assessments are aligned to module and programme learning outcomes and have been designed to assess the knowledge, skills, professional behaviours and clinical competencies required for safe and effective practice. The programme employs a diverse range of assessment methods to ensure that different types of learning outcomes are assessed using the most appropriate approach. These include unseen written examinations, case studies, reports, practical assessments, presentations, research posters, dissertations, clinical competency assessments, viva examinations and workplace based assessments. This variety of assessment enables learners to demonstrate achievement across the full range of programme learning outcomes.
- The visitors were satisfied with the information provided and 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.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observations they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

- The programme is approved.
- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year.

Reason for this decision: The Education and Training Committee Panel accepted the visitor's recommendation that the programme should receive approval.

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	University of Southampton		
Case reference	CAS-01989-F1W0W6	Lead visitors	Robert MacKinnon Claire Langman
Quality of provision			
Through this assessment, we have noted: Through this assessment, we determined that quality activity was not required, as the education provider had made a thorough submission.			
Facilities provided			
Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities: - The current programme team is already established and actively teaching on the approved BSc (Hons) and MSci Audiology programmes, and this existing staff resource will directly support the delivery of the proposed programme. - The proposed programme will be delivered at the Highfield campus, where the Audiology Skills Lab is also located. This lab provides learners with opportunities to practise and develop their clinical skills. In addition to the skills lab, learners will have access to a range of simulation equipment to support their practical learning. As the education provider already delivers established audiology programmes, all necessary resources and facilities are already in place to support the new programme.			
Programmes			
Programme name	Mode of study	First intake date	Nature of provision
MSc Audiology with clinical placement	FT (Full time)	21/09/2026	Taught (HEI)

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Podiatry	FT (Full time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist		POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/06/1993
Hearing Aid Aptitude Test	DL (Distance learning)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/07/2014
BSc (Hons) Audiology	FT (Full time)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/09/2017
MSci Audiology	FT (Full time)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/08/2019
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/01/1994
MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Occupational therapist			01/01/2021
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/1994
MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2004
Pg Dip Physiotherapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/10/2009
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DclinPsychol)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist		01/01/1994
Doctorate in Educational Psychology	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Educational psychologist		01/01/2005
Independent and Supplementary Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014