
Approval process report

University of Lancashire, Speech and Language Therapy, 2024-25
(degree apprenticeship)

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve the BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy programme at the University of Lancashire. 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. We needed to review 19 areas through stage 2 of the process.
- Reviewed the programme against our programme level standards and 19 areas relating to our institution level standards through stage 2 of the process. We 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.
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme is approved.

Through this report, we have noted:

- The areas we explored through quality activity focused on:
 - Quality theme 1 – ensuring ongoing appropriate capacity, and ensuring that the new apprenticeship programme does not reduce placement capacity for existing provision. The education provider demonstrated that they have considered these areas and that they will be able to manage practice-based learning capacity, and that the new programme will not interfere with the existing provision.

Previous consideration	N / A as this assessment did not arise from a previous assessment.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide whether the programme is approved.
Next steps	Subject to the Panel's decision, we will add the programme to the list of approved programmes.

The education provider is in performance review process for the 2025-26 academic year. Their portfolio is due to be submitted on 9 March 2026

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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 detailed in this report meets 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:

Paul Bates	Lead visitor, Paramedic
Lucy Myers	Lead visitor, Speech and language therapist
Niall Gooch	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 16 HCPC-approved programmes across 8 professions and including two Independent and Supplementary Prescribing programmes. It is a Higher Education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2005.

During the 2024-25 academic year, the education provider changed its name, from the University of Central Lancashire to the University of Lancashire. In 2025 we asked the education provider to clarify the details of the employers on their three existing apprenticeships, as part of HCPC Education department initiative to ensure that all apprenticeships had the appropriate partnerships with employers in place.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The education 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	Biomedical scientist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2014
	Dietitian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2022
	Hearing Aid Dispenser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2022
	Occupational therapy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2012
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2005
	Speech and language therapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2020
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2006

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	754	779	2024	<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 education provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>This data does not suggest any need to explore the area further, as the learner numbers are what we would expect.</p>
Learner non-continuation	3%	4%	2020-21	<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,</p>

				<p>the education provider's performance has improved by 2%.</p> <p>This data point suggests that we do not need to investigate this area any further through the process.</p>
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	92%	97%	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 above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 4%.</p> <p>This data point suggests that we do not need to investigate this area any further through the process 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>

Learner satisfaction	79.0%	71.7%	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 fallen by 11%.</p> <p>Through the process we did consider how well the education provider will support learners. We considered that the arrangements in place for supporting learners and giving them a good experience are appropriate.</p>
HCPC performance review cycle length			2025-26	<p>The education provider last went through performance review in 2021-22. We considered that their next performance review should be in four years' time, and we are undertaking that review currently in the 2025-26 academic year.</p>

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, the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

Admissions

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Information for applicants –**
 - Institutional policies require that admissions information for applicants is provided on the University website. We are aware from information previously supplied to us that there is a central office which is responsible for maintaining this information in co-operation with individual programmes. The information for this specific apprenticeship programme will be similar to that provided for the existing physiotherapy and occupational therapy apprenticeship programmes, with relevant changes made. An example of these changes is that, because of the nature of speech and language therapist profession, this apprenticeship programme requires higher English language skills than other apprenticeship programmes. There will be a webpage which explains the nature of the programme and highlights the requirements.
 - This is useful information which gives us a good idea of how the education provider will meet the relevant standards. However, the education provider has not provided appropriate information about how they will collaborate with employer partners around the provision of information for applicants. As the employer has not been confirmed, we will need to assess how applicants find out about and understand the programme, and how they and the education provider, gain the information they need to make an informed choice. We will need to assess this as part of stage 2 of the approval process for the apprenticeship programme.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - The education provider stated that all applicants will be interviewed by both the education provider and the employer. Assessment of applicant suitability is covered by an admissions policy and procedure for apprenticeships set at the institution level. The policy states that all apprentices must undergo an interview with both the employer and the education provider to assess their suitability for the programme. In terms of ownership of different parts of the process, employers will bear the responsibility for occupational health and Disclosure & Barring Service

(DBS) screening, and the education provider will review academic suitability and English language skills.

- This approach appears to be generally appropriate because it will enable the education provider as an institution to make appropriate judgements about the English language skills, health and character of applicants to programmes. However, through stage 2 we will request some additional information about the detail of their process in this area, in line with SETs 2.3 to 2.5. These require that the education provider demonstrate how they ensure that applicants have a good command of English, that they are suitable persons, and that they comply with relevant health requirements. From the information we have currently it is unclear what specifically the education provider will do in this area.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - The education provider did not provide sufficient information in the approval request form to enable us to make a clear judgement about AP(E)L at this stage. The education provider does have an institution-level procedure for assessing prior learning, as set out in their admissions policy. However, it is not clear how or whether it will be used for this programme. The education provider do say that that they will have a “skills scan” for all learners coming on to the programme. It is not clear what the purpose of this scan will be, or how it will be integrated into the rest of the admissions process.
 - For this reason, we will consider through stage 2 of the approval process how the education provider meets SET 2.6, which requires education providers to have in place “an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants’ prior learning and experience”.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)–**
 - The approval request form provided limited information about the approach in this area. In the information supplied as part of previous approval processes they have stated that they have an institutional approach to EDI based on “four pillars”. By this they mean they focus on achieving fairness in the following areas:
 - recruitment of staff and learners;
 - learner outcomes;
 - community feeling; and
 - research into EDI.
 - All programmes are required to conform with this institutional approach. What this means in practice is that during the annual review process they are required to account for how they have performed in all those areas. The education provider’s performance around EDI was found to be good during the 2021-22 performance review process.
 - The ARF does not explain how this approach to EDI will be applied on the programme. As the employer has not been confirmed, we will need to assess how applicants find out about and understand the programme, and how they and the education provider, gain the information they need to

make an informed choice. We will need to assess this as part of stage 2 of the approval process for the apprenticeship programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: We need to further understand the relationship between both parties in the following areas through Stage 2 of this approval process. We will be seeking further information with regards to the following Standards through stage 2 of the process:

- SET 2.1 – how employers provide information about the programme for their employees. We will need to assess how applicants understand about the programme, and how they and the education provider, gain the information they need to make an informed choice.
- SETs 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 - whose policies and processes relating to English language, character, and health are taken into consideration through the application process, and what happens, and who holds the overall decision, if they differ.
- SET 2.7 - whose policies and processes relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are taken into consideration through the application process, and what happens, and who holds the overall decision, if they differ.

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register¹ –**
 - The education provider delivers an existing MSc Speech and Language Therapy. They explained that the new apprenticeship will be “aligned” with this programme, in terms of content and assessment.
 - The existing provision demonstrates that the education provider has the staff, and the institutional infrastructure and experience, to deliver Level 6 education in speech and language therapy. The proposed programme is at Level 6. This means that they are at the level that SET 1.1 states we would normally expect for an HCPC-approved speech and language therapy. They deliver a broad range of HCPC-approved programmes, including other apprenticeships, so it is reasonable for us to consider that they are able to deliver an additional HCPC-approved apprenticeship.
 - We consider the relevant standards are met because the education provider is able to deliver the provision at the appropriate level. We can be confident of this based on our knowledge of their existing provision and the previous approval processes they have been through.
- **Sustainability of provision –**

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

- The education provider stated that a business case is required for all programmes. They noted also that there is a regional workforce shortage in the speech and language therapy profession, and that this apprenticeship is designed to address that shortage. We know from previous approval process reviews and from the baseline document that the education provider have defined processes for ensuring the viability of individual programmes. Faculties are required to report their programmes' status to senior leadership and to identify possible challenges on an annual basis.
- However, the education provider have not explained how they will ensure the sustainability of this particular apprenticeship. We can take some assurance from past approval process reviews and from the performance review in 2021-22 that the education provider will be able to meet the relevant standards in this area.
- As a result, we will need to consider through stage 2 of this process how the education provider will ensure that this specific programme can be sustained appropriately. In particular we will need to understand how the education provider will collaborate with employers to ensure sustainable provision.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - The education provider has been delivering an HCPC approved speech and language therapy programme since 2020. This means there is institutional experience and expertise available, as well as the facilities to enable effective delivery of the apprenticeship programme. The education provider also delivers two other apprenticeships, which began in 2023 and 2024.
 - We know from the baseline document and from the 2021-22 performance review that all programmes are expected to make annual reports to ensure their ongoing effectiveness and viability. These reports are used by the senior management team to drive improvement and referred to in future review processes.
 - However, the ARF did not provide sufficient detail for us to understand how the proposed programme would be overseen by management, how they would ensure appropriately qualified staff, how they would liaise with the professional body, and how they would work with the employers. We will therefore need to explore the detail of these areas through stage 2 of this process. The particular SETs in question are:
 - 3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.
 - 3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.
 - 3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - In the ARF, the education provider stated that they have separate institutional policies for staff development and staff appraisal. They note also that staff have quarterly appraisals, which focus on operational

effectiveness and development needs, and longer term needs for training and academic progress.

- We know from the 2021-22 performance review that the education provider's systems include annual reviews of individual staff members, and individualised career development pathways developed by mutual agreement between staff and their line managers. The visitors in that performance review noted the education provider's reflections on how specific members of staff had been enabled to choose appropriate additional qualifications, and also individual case studies of how the education provider had responded to issues arising from regular staff reviews.
- However, the relatively limited information provided in the ARF around this area means that we will need to consider some additional information through stage 2 of this process. In particular we will need to understand how the education provider's policies will be used to ensure appropriate management and development of staff on the proposed new programme, in line with SET 3.11: An effective programme must be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators, appropriate to their role in the programme.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - The education provider has an institutional level process for managing partnerships at the institutional level. They have a UK Partnerships team which sits within their External Relations Services. Partnerships operate with a formal framework with collaborative contracts which are renewed every five years. These are supported by the requirements set out in their Academic Regulations and quality assurance processes.
 - They also use a devolved management model supported by the central UK Partnerships team which oversees relationship management regular communication, partner visits, and ongoing monitoring.
 - The education provider stated that their key partnerships are the employer partners who will be providing the apprentices and the relevant placements. They had not presented any additional information about who the employer are at the time of this stage 1 review. This means that we will have to consider through stage 2 how the education provider will be collaborating with employer partners to deliver appropriate clinical learning.
 - We know from discussions with the education provider that they are still finalising the details of the employer partners. We did consider through their most recent performance review that the mechanisms in place for managing partnerships are well established and appropriate. The visitors in that review considered that the education provider was well-integrated with regional consortiums and working groups and had clear internal mechanisms for managing partnerships.
 - We will determine through stage 2 who exactly the education provider will be working with as their employer partners.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: Through stage 2, HCPC visitors will need to consider whether the education provider has secured appropriate employer partners for the apprenticeship to function sustainably as designed. We will also need to gain a clear understanding of how the education provider will ensure effective programme delivery, as outlined above, especially as regards relationships with employers and development of programme staff. This is relevant to the following SETS:

- SET 3.1 – where learners are confirmed as coming from to consider the sustainability of the proposed programme. This includes understanding how the resourcing / threats / support are recognised and managed.
- SET 3.2 – SET 3.2 - how the education provider and employer understand the responsibilities of all involved and work together to deliver an effective programme.
- SET 3.11 – how the education provider will ensure appropriate professional development of all staff

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**
 - The education provider stated that they have an internal moderation process, peer observation of teaching and an external examiner system. They have an external examiner guide which outlines roles, and responsibilities of external examiners within the institution's quality assurance framework. It emphasises the key function in ensuring that academic standards and student achievement align with institutional expectations.
 - The education provider has not provided additional detail of these processes. For example, they have not explained the lines of responsibility for the processes. Although we have previously considered that the education provider's arrangements for ensuring academic quality were appropriate, we will need to explore further through this process how, specifically, the education provider ensures that programmes meet academic quality requirements.
 - The relevant SET is 3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place. We will need to consider additional evidence of how this standard is met.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
 - The ARF states that practice education will be monitored using two key mechanisms: the North West Placement Audit Document (NWPAD) and quarterly reviews for apprentices. The NWPAD has been created specifically to ensure that the education provider can monitor learners

- effectively and consistently in settings outside the university. This includes apprentices working with their employers. Additionally the education provider has a “Visiting tutor policy” to govern how practice educators will be trained and prepared to support learners’ clinical learning.
- The ARF also states that “placements will be audited for quality, safety and supportive learning environments.” No further evidence is provided about this approach, which means that we cannot make a fully informed decision about the standard. As a result, we will ask for additional information about the audit of practice quality through stage 2 of the process. For the proposed apprenticeship programme, the employer has not been confirmed. We will therefore need to understand how the education provider works in partnership with the employer and their requirements through Stage 2 of the process.
 - As such, we will need to consider the processes to ensure practice educators have the programme specific understanding to deliver and assess the learning outcomes (SET 5.7); and learners and practice educators have the information they require to be prepared before going into the practice environment (SET 5.8).
 - In addition, we will need to understand how the education provider assesses and monitors the quality of the practice environment through the partnership with the employer (SET 5.3). This includes ensuring there is a safe and supportive environment for learners, as employees, and service users (SET 5.4).
 - **Learner involvement –**
 - The Staff Student Liaison Process sets out a range of mechanisms for gathering learner feedback. These include:
 - Proactive questioning of learners about the strengths of the programme, and any possible areas for improvement.
 - Engagement with learners to understand their views on learner experiences of the programme and staff communication with learners.
 - Identifying when there is a need for a learner response to matters arising at the level of the programme, the school, or the department.
 - The education provider also has an institutional process for monitoring attendance (SET 4.11). The Student Attendance Monitoring Policy 2025-26 and the Student Attendance Monitoring Procedure lay out clearly the expectations of learners and the steps that will be taken if attendance is not within acceptable levels. We know from other evidence that the education provider has a mechanism, the Partnership Operational Group, for working with employer partners to ensure that attendance in the employer setting is appropriate.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes. We believe 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 education provider's established service user team will be used for the new programme. This is known as the Commensus Service User Engagement Group (CSUEG). CSUEG has been used by the education provider for some time to enable programmes to have access to a wide pool of service users from various backgrounds.
- The last performance review considered that use of service users by the education provider was effective and appropriate. Specific individuals within faculties have responsibility for working with this group for their programmes. This includes the HCPC-approved programmes.
- 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: As noted above, through stage 2 we will consider standards around academic practice quality. The relevant standard here is SET 3.4. Additionally, we will need to consider the relationship between the education provider and employer in the monitoring of practice quality and safety, and appropriate training and preparation for educators

- SET 3.4 – how the education provider ensures appropriate quality assurance of the programme, including how they co-operate with employer partners to do so.
- SET 5.3 - how the education provider assesses and monitors the practice environment through the partnership with the employer.
- SET 5.4 - the processes to make sure practice-based learning takes place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.
- SETs 5.7 and 5.8 - the processes to ensure practice educators have the programme specific understanding to deliver and assess the learning outcomes; and learners and practice educators have the information they require to be prepared before going into the practice environment.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
 - The ARF notes the education provider's personal tutor policy and their use of academic coaches to support learners' academic skills. The personal tutor policy requires that all learners are allocated a dedicated staff member as a contact point for the duration of the programme. The ARF also states that learners on the new programme will have access to all the normal pathways for support available to learners on other approved programmes. Additionally there is a Support to Study Policy and Procedure (SSPP), which is used when learners are struggling with the programme for some reason and need formal help. The SSPP is detailed and sets out many different ways in which learners might be supported.

- We consider that these arrangements are broadly appropriate for supporting learners from both the pastoral and academic perspectives. During the most recent performance review, the education provider reflected on how they support learners at the institutional level and we considered that they were performing well in this area.
- However, the ARF did not set out how the education provider would work with employer partners. We will therefore need to consider through stage 2 how the education provider will manage this requirement for the apprenticeship. The employer has not been confirmed. We will therefore need to understand how the education provider works in partnership with the employer and their requirements through Stage 2 of the process.
- We recognise there will be additional policies and processes in place from the employer which support wellbeing and learning (SET 3.13). As part of this, we need to understand which policies apply in each situation and how learners know about these; how learners access academic support while in their place of employment; and whether and how processes are shared between the employer and the education provider.
- We will also need to review how the education provider and the employer work together to provide an impartial, fair and supportive environment for learners to progress (SET 3.14).
- We will need to review who learners can complain to and what they can expect from each party. This includes how the education provider manages complaints from learners about allegations relating to incidents which happened at their place of employment (SET 3.15).
- In addition, the education provider and employer will have specific policies and processes in place to support learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users (SET 3.17). We need to understand which policies apply in which situation and who responds.
- We will also need to consider policies and processes in place for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners (SET 4.10). This is because the education provider and employer may have specific, and differing, policies / processes.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
 - The ARF sets out the institutional mechanisms available to support learners. There is a whole suite of support available at the education provider if there are concerns about academic performance or professional suitability. Quarterly reviews are identified as a key mechanism for identifying struggling learners. They stated that learners have regular contact with staff, who can monitor their progress and status, through mechanisms outlined elsewhere in this section.
 - This appears to be broadly appropriate as far as the education provider is concerned. However, we do not have sufficient information regarding how the education provider will work with employer partners on the apprenticeship programme.
 - For the proposed apprenticeship programme, the employer has not been confirmed. We will therefore need to understand how the education

provider works in partnership with the employer and their requirements through Stage 2 of the process.

- The education provider and employer will have specific policies and processes to ensure the ongoing suitability of the learner (SET 3.16). We will need to understand which apply in which situation, and which takes priority relating to achievement and progression.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
 - The ARF refers to the education provider's IPE policy and their Apprenticeship delivery planning document. The School of Health Sciences in which the programme is situated has a policy on IPE which all programmes must follow.
 - In a discussion with the Executive in January 2025, the education provider stated that apprenticeships gives opportunities for multi-disciplinary learning that other programmes may not offer. This is because the learners on an apprenticeship spend longer in the workplace. They are also more closely integrated with a workplace because of their existing employment.
 - 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 ARF states that the programme will be required to follow the institutional EDI policy, which sets out a “four pillars” approach. Under this policy, all programmes are required to gather and act upon EDI data in key areas.
 - We were informed by the education provider in conversation in January 2025 that EDI reporting is a part of their institutional review process, and is also considered through staff appraisals mentioned elsewhere in this section.
 - Regarding EDI, we considered that performance was satisfactory during the 2021-22 performance review. Our conclusion was that the education provider had appropriate EDI policies in place and that they were followed, with data being collected and discussed, and used for continuous improvement.
 - The approach set out in the ARF 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: As the employers have not been confirmed for the proposed apprenticeship programme, we will need to consider the relationship between the education provider and employer in the following areas through Stage 2 of the process:

- SET 3.13 – the additional policies and processes in place at the employer to support wellbeing and learning. As part of this, we need to understand which policies apply in each situation and how learners know about these; how learners access academic support while in their place of employment; and whether and how processes are shared between the employer and the education provider.
- SET 3.14 - how the education provider and the employer work together to provide and impartial, fair and supportive environment for learners to progress.
- SET 3.15 - who learners complain to and what they can expect from each party. This includes how the education provider manages complaints from learners about allegations relating to incidents which happened at their place of employment.
- SET 3.16 – the specific policies and processes from the education provider and employer to ensure the ongoing suitability of the learner. We will need to understand which apply in which situation, and which takes priority relating to achievement and progression.
- SET 3.17 – the specific policies and processes in place to support learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users. We need to understand which policies apply in which situation and who responds.
- SET 4.10 - the policies and processes in place for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners. This is because the education provider and employer may have specific, and differing, policies / processes.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - The education provider’s approach in this area is governed by the Internal moderation policy and by the external examiner process.
 - The ARF does not provide sufficient detail about the institutional approach in this area. The education provider’s assessment handbook does set out a much more granular approach to how they ensure objectivity in assessment. This handbook describes how grading bands will be used, what criteria markers and moderators will be used, and what kinds of person are appropriate to take forward assessment.
 - The handbook also explains how the education provider will ensure that learners are given a fair opportunity to complete work appropriately, and that they will be given guidance on what is expected of them. It also requires that learners not be over-burdened with assessment.
 - 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 –**

- Learners progress through programmes at the education provider in the manner set out in detail in the assessment handbook.
- This handbook has a section on “assessment feedback” as well as a section requiring all programmes to explain to their learners what exactly is required to them in each form of assessment. There are separate sections on moderation and retrieval of assessment – these explain clearly which parts of the programme must be completed, and what learners can do if they do not achieve appropriately in specific areas of assessment.
- 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.
- **Appeals –**
 - The ARF referred to the appeals policy. We reviewed the assessment handbook to understand more about how the education provider approaches appeals.
 - The handbook defines an appeal and sets out the circumstances under which learners may and may not appeal. It sets out a clear process by which appeals are considered, and the various grounds on which appeals may be made. Provision is made for appeals hearings, and the practicalities of learners attending such hearings are considered.
 - 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: None.

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1. There were some areas which we considered we should explore further through stage 2 of the process. We determined that stage 2 was the most appropriate point to undertake this exercise, to ensure that we applied the most appropriate level of scrutiny, and the case proceeded along appropriate timeframes.

For the proposed apprenticeship programme, it is clear the employer has not been confirmed. As learners will also be employees on this proposed programme, the employer is fundamental to the design, sustainability, and delivery of the programme to ensure those who complete, can meet our requirements for registration. It is therefore appropriate for us to refer the 19 areas identified through the institution level standards review, to Stage 2. These are outlined below:

- SET 2.1 – how employers provide information about the programme for their employees. We will need to assess how applicants understand about the

programme, and how they and the education provider, gain the information they need to make an informed choice.

- SETs 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 - whose policies and processes relating to English language, character, and health are taken into consideration through the application process, and what happens, and who holds the overall decision, if they differ.
- SET 2.7 - whose policies and processes relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are taken into consideration through the application process, and what happens, and who holds the overall decision, if they differ.
- SET 3.1 – where learners are confirmed as coming from to consider the sustainability of the proposed programme. This includes understanding how the resourcing / threats / support are recognised and managed.
- SET 3.2 – how the education provider and employer understand the responsibilities of all involved and work together to deliver an effective programme.
- SET 3.4 – how the education provider ensures appropriate quality assurance of the programme, including how they co-operate with employer partners to do so.
- SET 3.11 – how the education provider will ensure appropriate professional development of all staff
- SET 3.13 – the additional policies and processes in place at the employer to support wellbeing and learning. As part of this, we need to understand which policies apply in each situation and how learners know about these; how learners access academic support while in their place of employment; and whether and how processes are shared between the employer and the education provider.
- SET 3.14 - how the education provider and the employer work together to provide and impartial, fair and supportive environment for learners to progress.
- SET 3.15 - who learners complain to and what they can expect from each party. This includes how the education provider manages complaints from learners about allegations relating to incidents which happened at their place of employment.
- SET 3.16 – the specific policies and processes from the education provider and employer to ensure the ongoing suitability of the learner. We will need to understand which apply in which situation, and which takes priority relating to achievement and progression.
- SET 3.17 – the specific policies and processes in place to support learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users. We need to understand which policies apply in which situation and who responds.
- SET 4.10 - the policies and processes in place for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners. This is because the education provider and employer may have specific, and differing, policies / processes.
- SET 5.3 - how the education provider assesses and monitors the practice environment through the partnership with the employer.

- SET 5.4 - the processes to make sure practice-based learning takes place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.
- SETs 5.7 and 5.8 - the processes to ensure practice educators have the programme specific understanding to deliver and assess the learning outcomes; and learners and practice educators have the information they require to be prepared before going into the practice environment.

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

Libraries – The education provider operates three principal libraries across its campuses. The Preston Campus Library is accessible 24/7 and offers an extensive range of learner-focused services, including individual study zones, collaborative working areas, and access to academic resources and support.

Student Centre – Located at the heart of the Preston Campus, with satellite centres on additional sites, the Student Centre serves as a central hub for all learner support and wellbeing services. It provides coordinated access to guidance, pastoral care, and specialist assistance.

Speech and Language Therapy Resource Room – A dedicated facility used for a variety of teaching, learning, and assessment activities. The space supports both practical and theoretical components of Speech and Language Therapy programmes.

Simulated Clinical and Practical Learning Environments – Purpose-built spaces designed to replicate real clinical and professional settings. These environments enable learners to develop specialist skills, practise clinical procedures, and engage with applied learning in disciplines such as anatomy and other relevant fields.

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
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	WBL (Work based learning)	Speech and Language Therapist	25 learners, 1 cohort per year	01/03/2026

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 the Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists (RCSLT) as follows:

- In October 2025, the RCSLT had some concerns about the programme. They were uncertain about the programme structure, the assessment load, and whether the staffing is appropriate. We considered all these issues through our quality assessment and considered that relevant standards were met at threshold. We note also that the education provider had updated much of the programme documentation in response to the concerns expressed by the RCSLT.

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 – ensuring ongoing appropriate capacity, and ensuring that the new apprenticeship does not reduce placement capacity for existing provision

Area for further exploration: In their stage 2 submission, the education provider submitted several pieces of evidence. These were the details of employer engagement events, the programme delivery plan and the employer handbook. This handbook explains to the employer the education provider's expectations and requirements around the programme. These documents were useful in helping us to understand how the education provider will use their relationships with employers to maintain sufficient capacity in practice-based learning. However, information reviewed by the visitors did not sufficiently explain how the education provider would identify new opportunities for practice-based learning placements, and how they would ensure that the new programme did not affect capacity for the existing MSc Speech and Language Therapy.

Without this understanding they could not determine how the relevant standard was met, because it was not clear to them how the education provider would ensure an

appropriate process. It is important to understand how the education provider will grow placement capacity beyond its current employer network. If they are not able to do this, there is a risk that the education provider will not have enough sustainable practice-learning capacity.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We asked the education provider for an additional documentary submission.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted several additional documents concerning the work of the Partnership Operational Group (POG). This is a joint committee between the education provider and their employer- partners, handling all matters to do with the effective delivery of the programme. We also saw a presentation from an event put on in September 2025 by the education provider for the employer partners. This set out how the education provider would work with and support the confirmed employers, including how they would work with them to maintain capacity.

The POG materials similarly focused on the maintenance of capacity and showed that there had been specific discussions at the POG about how to balance the competing demands of the learners on the new programme and the learners on the existing MSc. We therefore considered that the education provider had demonstrated that they did have an appropriate and effective process in place to maintain and develop capacity for long-term sustainability.

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 2: Programme admissions –**
 - For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, we considered how the education provider met the institutional level standards which were referred from stage 1. This was to enable us to understand better how the education provider would work together with the employer during admissions process.
 - The education provider submitted documentary evidence to demonstrate their approach. They addressed all the relevant standards. They confirmed that employers will be responsible for Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and occupational health checks. The education provider's appeal process will be applied with regards to the final decision with regards to DBS appeals, and the employer will not be involved in this process.
 - Applicants will receive information about the programme through the education provider's established mechanisms outlined in the ARF. There will also be specific information events for those applicant working in healthcare settings who will be the people coming on to the programme. Interviews of candidates will be conducted jointly by the education provider and by their employers. It is the education provider's EDI policies which will be used for monitoring of EDI in admissions. The education provider's English language requirements will be applied for applicants to the proposed programme. The requirement will be for an IELTS score of 7.0 overall, with no component under 6.5.
 - Regarding AP(E)L, the education provider explained that the "skills scan" process will be used to enable them to understand the existing skills and competencies of applicants. The "skills scan" is a self-assessment questionnaire used to tailor individual learning pathways for applicants, including possible later entries if appropriate.
 - The education provider noted that admissions information would be available on the website and at open days. They also noted that information would be provided to employers and potential apprentices in joint meetings to introduce the programme and its entry requirements.
 - In light of the information we had seen, we considered that all the standards were met, because the education provider had set out clearly how they would meet the SET 2 standards. Information for applicants would be made available to possible learners through employers, working with the education provider. The likely applicants would be people working in SLT support roles. The education provider will hold responsibility for ensuring that all applicants score at least a 7.0 on IELTS, with no component below 6.5. The employer will take

responsibility for occupational health and DBS checks. However, if there are any appeals related to DBS, the education provider will be finally responsible for these.

- Overall, the visitors agreed that this standard was met. The education provider demonstrated that they have appropriate processes for providing information to applicants and ensuring only suitable qualified applicants are admitted onto the programme. Additional areas referred over from stage 1 were fully addressed, confirming that the education provider's policies would guide the majority of the admissions process while the employers would contribute to assessing applicant suitability. The education provider also clarified how employers would share information about the apprenticeship through joint meetings with prospective learners.”
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership –**
 - For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, we also considered the institutional level standards which were referred from stage 1.
 - The education provider submitted records of events held with confirmed employer partners. They also submitted additional information about their plans for working with them, and samples of the communication they had undertaken with those employers to confirm their participation.
 - We considered that this information demonstrated that SET 3.1 was met. It was clear from the documents that the education provider had named and confirmed employer partners in place. It was also clear that they had undertaken sustained work to ensure that the programme was financially viable.
 - The education provider submitted a Staff Development Policy which set out how they would ensure that all their staff had access to appropriate training and development opportunities. We considered that this was appropriate evidence to show SET 3.11 was met as it covered all the key areas such as protected time for study, time off for study days, and mandatory training requirements. It also made clear the mechanisms by which training needs would be identified and addressed.
 - The education provider submitted evidence explaining how supporting learners to raise concerns and obtain consent was part of the process by which learners were introduced to particular clinical settings. Practice educator training materials were supplied which set out clearly the responsibilities of practice educators in the employer setting with regard to these particular issues. We understood clearly from the clarification provided that there was a defined pathway for learners to understand raising concerns and obtaining appropriate consent during their clinical placements. We therefore considered that SET 3.17 was met.
 - We requested further information about how the programme would be managed and effectively monitored and evaluated. We asked the education provider to elaborate on the biannual employer engagement

forum would work, and how the Partnership Operational Group (POG) would function. We also asked them to provide more information about the programme management roles and to identify the member of staff who will be the Speech and Language Therapy Apprenticeship Educator.

- It was clear to us from this evidence that there were specific mechanisms in place for close collaboration with employer partners around quality monitoring. These include regular tripartite meetings focused on specific learners, ongoing opportunities for feedback in both directions between the employer and the education provider, and monitoring of agreed metrics. The main responsibility for this monitoring is taken by the education provider. The POG would meet on a quarterly basis with senior and operational representation from the education provider and the employers, to discuss matters arising with the partnership arrangements. This enabled us to determine that SET 3.2, requiring effective management, was met.
- We also considered through stage 2 the SETs 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16. Specifically, we asked the education provider to elaborate on whose policies would take priority regarding these issues.
- Regarding SET 3.13, the education provider has a Support to Study (STS) Policy and Procedure. This acts as an umbrella for individual and more specific support systems around mental health, drugs and other areas. The policies in this area focus on support rather than a punitive approach. The education provider informed us that these policies would apply for the programme, and that employers would be required to follow the education provider policies as regards the learners on the programme.
- Regarding SET 3.14, the education provider's institution-level EDI Policy is implemented in the context of the long-term Belonging strategy. All programmes must monitor and report EDI data annually, including data on achievement and participation, and there is a report compiled by the education provider's senior leadership. All staff must undertake mandatory EDI training. The education provider confirmed to us that their own EDI policies will take priority for learners in the employer setting.
- Regarding SET 3.15, learner complaints are managed under the Student Complaints Procedure (SCP), or if relevant under other specific policies dealing with concerns about particular areas, for example safeguarding or data protection. The education provider confirmed to us that learners on the programme will use their complaints procedure for all relevant issues, even if the issue arose in the employer setting.
- Regarding SET 3.16, the key documents in this area are the Fitness to Practise (FTP) Procedure and the Support to Study (STS) Policy. The STS policy lays out how learners who are struggling to continue their studies or maintain an appropriate level of engagement can be helped in a structured way. The FTP Procedure applies to all professional

qualification programmes and sets out the circumstances in which action might be taken to address FTP-related matters, including self-referrals. It will apply to learners in the employer setting on this programme.

- Regarding SETs 3.9 and 3.10, the education provider submitted a staff workload management document, alongside updated CVs. This documentation gave more information about the staff's experience and the amount of time that each would have available for the programme. The workload management document also set out the education provider's intentions around the use of visiting lecturers and staff from other subjects. Visiting lecturers would be used for some modules. Staff from other departments would be used also, and their involvement was set out in the workload management document. We considered that the education provider had demonstrated they had staff with appropriate experience, because they had worked on the education provider's speech and language therapy programme or had worked on similar programmes elsewhere. Additionally, we considered that they had an appropriate pool of visiting lecturers and staff from other subject areas.
- We also explored SET 3.6 through [quality activity 1](#). Following this exploration, we considered the standards met. The education provider had demonstrated that they had appropriate arrangements in place for managing capacity in collaboration with employer partners and other relevant stakeholders. They had shown too that they had appropriate expertise within their staff team.
- The evidence provided for quality activity 1, concerning the maintenance of capacity and the education provider's relationships with employer partners, also addressed a point of clarification that the visitors noted regarding SET 3.5. The noted the educational provider's explanation about how engagement with employers using the PARE document which contains learning outcomes for the placements that will then be used pass placement modules. Placement audits are carried out to ensure suitability of the employer to provide placement.
- Additionally, we also asked the education provider to explain the nature of the library resources that would be available to learners studying remotely or who would otherwise find it difficult to access on-site services at the education provider. They provided us with a guide to Student Services that informed learners how to access various kinds of resources at different times.
- Following quality activity, the visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
 - For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, we considered how the education provider had met SET 4.10. Specifically, we were seeking to understand how the education provider and the employer would work together to ensure that learners understood how to obtain appropriate consent.

- The education provider submitted a narrative explaining how supporting learners to obtain consent was part of the process by which learners were introduced to particular clinical settings. Practice educator training materials were supplied which set out clearly the responsibilities of practice educators in the employer setting with regard to this particular standard. We understood clearly from the clarification that there was a defined pathway for learners to understand obtaining appropriate consent during their clinical placements.
- The education provider submitted evidence showing how the programmes were structured and how they would be delivered. This included module descriptors for both programmes, and separate SOPs mapping exercises for each programme. Also included was an academic quality policy, and programme specifications and handbooks and a formal internally produced guidance document that set out to staff how to map their programmes appropriately. In the mapping documents, the education provider had referenced both the standards of proficiency (SOPs) and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs). The visitors were therefore satisfied that SETs 4.1 and 4.2 were met, because it was clear to them how the education provider was integrating the SOPs and the SCPEs within the programme.
- Other documentation relating to the programme's content and structure was also supplied by the education provider. These documents set out why the programmes had been designed in the way they had. A policy on how to use the simulation suite on the programmes was also included. The programme descriptors set out the teaching and learning methods that would be used on the programme.
- The visitors requested clarification around SETs 4.3, 4.4 and 4.6. Specifically, they wanted to clarify the following:
 - Whether the education provider had considered Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) guidance on curriculum structure, and where eating, drinking and swallowing was addressed.
 - Whether there is a mechanism for ensuring that the programme remains in touch with current practice, and for ensuring reading lists are up to date.
 - How the education provider will ensure equity of experience and participation for learners who are accessing teaching and learning sessions remotely, and how the education provider will ensure that clinical learning supports theoretical learning.
- The education provider supplied additional information to clarify these points. This included module descriptors demonstrating that eating, drinking and swallowing would be addressed, and that the modules were structured appropriately in line with guidance. They included a document showing how modules had been amended to address HCPC and RCSLT concerns, and detailed information about how they had updated, and would update the programme in line with relevant

guidance. The education provider also used a programme mapping exercise to illustrate where clinical and theoretical learning were integrated. The point about equity of access was addressed through reference to policies on inclusion and a learner handbook that set out what learners could do if they considered they were not being treated fairly.

- In light of this evidence, the visitors considered that the standards in SET 4 were met. This was because the education provider had clearly articulated their approach in all relevant areas, and where necessary had supplied an evidence base. They had adopted a wide range of teaching and learning methods. They had a clear mechanism for updating and reviewing the programmes to ensure they reflected professional expectations and current practice. The staff had a range of clinical experience which would help the learners understand contemporary approaches. Every module included at least some requirement for evidence-based practice and autonomous working.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
 - For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, we considered SETs 5.3, 5.4 5.7 and 5.8, referred from stage 1. Specifically, we were seeking to understand how the education provider and the employer would work together to ensure these SETs were all met for the proposed degree apprenticeship programme.
 - Regarding SETs 5.3 and 5.4, we requested some additional information about the standard was met. The education provider stated that they have a designated team for managing practice-based learning. This team is responsible for ensuring that practice-based learning settings are both high-quality, and safe and supportive, and has existing relationships with the employer partners in the region. They have records of all practice-based learning settings in the region. They noted also that learners can feed back on practice-based learning in real time via their the Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) documents. In their response to our quality activity, the education provider also stated that in their agreements with employer partners, which all partners had to agree, there was a specific section which set out the employers' willingness to ensure safe and supportive and high-quality practice-based learning. Elsewhere in the stage 2 submission, the education provider noted that at the very early stages of the admission process, employers who have apprentices coming on to the programme need to complete an eligibility and due diligence document which enables the education provider to make an informed decision about their suitability. In light of all this evidence, we considered that the standards were met, because the education provider had demonstrated that they were able to ensure that all practice-based learning settings.
 - Regarding SETs 5.7 and 5.8, the education provider also submitted training materials that will be used to prepare practice educators, and a workload management document that showed how practice educators

would be trained and prepared for supervision. We also reviewed tables showing the structure of the programme and highlighting the points at which practice educators would be prepared to supervise learners. This information was repeated in the programme specification and the apprentice handbook.

- We considered the relevant standards were met because the education provider had clearly demonstrated mechanisms by which the employer settings could be monitored for quality and safety, and by which they could assure themselves of the training status and preparation of practice educators.
- Regarding the stage 2 standards, the education provider submitted a programme structure document. This described the overall structure of the programme and explained how practice-based learning was integrated. Assessment guidance for practice-based learning was also described, which enabled the visitors to understand how the competencies acquired in the classroom would help learners to progress in practice-based learning, and vice versa.
- We requested additional information around SETs 5.1 and 5.5. In particular, we asked for more information from the education provider to demonstrate how they ensured that employers understood the need to release learners for placements that were not in their normal employer setting. We also asked the education provider to clarify the process for ensuring an appropriate number of appropriately skilled and experienced practice educators in practice-based learning. This was especially important given that employers would take the lead in securing the placements.
- The education provider supplied additional information to address this in the form of the following:
 - A Planning Consent document, which showed how employers would organise learners' time and had to be agreed by them;
 - a Training Plan setting out on the job hours compared with time in other settings;
 - A Programme Mapping document which clarified where in the programme the learners would be in particular settings.
- Having reviewed this information, we had a clear idea of how the education provider would ensure employers clearly understood their responsibilities related to releasing learners for practice-based learning. We considered that SET 5.1 was met because it was clear how practice-based learning was integral to the programme.
- Regarding SET 5.5, we asked the education provider to state the experience requirements for practice educators, and what was considered an appropriate number of practice educators for supervision. We also asked this would be communicated to the employers. The education provider stated that this was set out in the Mentor and Placement Handbook. The handbook we saw was for the operating department practitioner apprenticeship, to give a sense of how this had worked in practice on that programme. The evidence

showed that the education provider had a requirement that all practice educators were either registered speech and language therapists or had been appropriately trained to supervise speech and language learners. The education provider ensured that employers understood this through the programme handbook and through the various collaboration mechanisms described in this report.

- We also determined, from this evidence, that SET 5.2 was met. This was because the education provider had clear mechanisms for ensuring that there was an appropriate structure, duration and range of practice-based learning to enable learners to achieve the learning outcomes and to meet the standards of proficiency. The agreement that all employers had to sign, the regular meetings between the education provider and employers, and the Programme Map we saw all made this clear.
- Regarding SET 5.6, we queried with the education provider how they intended to ensure that all practice educators had appropriate knowledge, skills and experience. We saw a narrative explaining how practice educators would be appropriately prepared for supervision, and asked for additional evidence elaborating the detail of the preparation. We received a copy of the presentation that would be delivered to practice educators. This was useful, but we noted that it was the same presentation used across all apprenticeships and so lacked some specific information about speech and language therapy. We considered that the standard was met at threshold but set a recommendation that the presentation be reviewed to ensure that it had appropriate profession-specific information.
- We considered that the evidence we saw in this area demonstrated the SET 5 standards were met. The education provider had taken overall responsibility for ensuring that all the SET 5 standards were met on the apprenticeship programme, even when learners would be in the employer setting.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
 - The education provider supplied a SOPs mapping exercise, which set out which SOPs would be assessed in which parts of the programmes, as well as individual programme specifications. This enabled us to determine that SET 6.1 was met, because it was clear that anyone who completes the programme successfully will have to meet all the relevant standards of proficiency.
 - In the initial stage 2 submission, for SET, the education provider sent us the following:
 - A programme handbook for the apprenticeship
 - All module descriptors
 - A document mapping the programme to RCSLT guidance
 - A Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour mapping exercise (the KSB standards are issued by Skills England, and are a way of benchmarking apprenticeships)
 - Programme specification

- This was helpful information because it enabled the visitors to understand the design of the assessment and the outlines of the approach to ensuring learners met the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs). However, in relation to 6.2 and 6.5, they also requested some additional information about the detail of the assessment at the module level and the exact mechanism by which the education provider would ensure the SCPEs were met. The education provider therefore submitted a guide to the modules, a section of the programme handbook, and a document outlining how they would ensure appropriate sign-off of competencies – the Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) document.
- From this information, the visitors could see that there was an appropriate range of assessments, and a clear process for ensuring that all the SCPEs were met by all learners.
- In light of this evidence, the visitors considered that SETs 6.1, 6.2 and 6.5 were all met. This was because the education provider had demonstrated that their assessment strategy and design would require that all learners were assessed on both SOPs and SCPEs at appropriate points of the programme. Learners who did not meet the SOPs would not be able to complete the programme. We were therefore satisfied that the standards were 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.

5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the presentation for practice educators to make it less generic and more closely tailored to the specific requirements of supervising speech and language therapy learners.

Reason: In their initial evidence, the education provider submitted a narrative explaining how practice educators would be appropriately prepared for supervision in practice-based learning. We asked for some clarification of the detail of what would be delivered to these practice educators. The education provider submitted a copy of the presentation that would be given to practice educators to ensure that they have the appropriate skills for supervising learners in clinical settings.

We considered this was good evidence, because it showed that the education provider had a clear mechanism for teaching practice educators relevant skills for effective supervision in practice-based learning. However, the visitors did note that some of the content was generic, i.e. it was the presentation used to prepare practice educators across the provision. They considered that for the purposes of this specific programme, it might be helpful to review the presentation to ensure that it could be tailored appropriately to speech and language therapy. This would mitigate the risk of practice educators not having the necessary skills to supervise speech and language therapy learners.

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 observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that the programme is approved.

Reason for this decision: The Panel accepted the visitor's recommendation that 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	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
University of Lancashire	CAS-01724-S8K8K3	<p>Paul Bates – Paramedic</p> <p>Lucy Myers – Speech and language therapist</p>	<p>The areas we explored through quality activity focused on:</p> <p>Quality theme 1 – ensuring ongoing appropriate capacity, and ensuring that the new apprenticeship does not reduce placement capacity for existing provision. The education provider demonstrated that they have considered these questions and that they will be able to manage practice-based learning capacity, and that the new programme will not interfere with the existing provision.</p>	<p>Libraries – The education provider operates three principal libraries across its campuses. The Preston Campus Library is accessible 24/7 and offers an extensive range of learner-focused services, including individual study zones, collaborative working areas, and access to academic resources and support.</p> <p>Student Centre – Located at the heart of the Preston Campus, with satellite centres on additional sites, the Student Centre serves as a central hub for all learner support and wellbeing services. It provides coordinated access to guidance, pastoral care, and specialist assistance.</p> <p>Speech and Language Therapy Resource Room – A dedicated facility used for a variety of</p>

				<p>teaching, learning, and assessment activities. The space supports both practical and theoretical components of Speech and Language Therapy programmes.</p> <p>Simulated Clinical and Practical Learning Environments – Purpose-built spaces designed to replicate real clinical and professional settings. These environments enable learners to develop specialist skills, practise clinical procedures, and engage with applied learning in disciplines such as anatomy and other relevant fields.</p>
Programmes				
Programme name			Mode of study	Nature of provision
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy			WBL (Work based learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
Advanced Certificate Non Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/10/2006
Advanced Certificate Non Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2014
BSc (Hons) in Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2012
BSc (Hons) in Operating Department Practice	WBL (Work based learning)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2019
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2019
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	PT (Part time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2019
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Degree Apprenticeship)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			09/09/2024
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2018
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2005
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy (Degree Apprenticeship)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			04/09/2023
FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology	DL (Distance learning)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/09/2022
MSc Dietetics (pre-registration)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Dietitian			01/01/2022

MSc Occupational Therapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Occupational therapist		01/08/2018
MSc Physiotherapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Physiotherapist		01/08/2018
MSc Speech and Language Therapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Speech and language therapist		01/09/2020