

Approval process quality report

Education provider	Swansea University
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science for Emergency Medical Technicians, Part time
Date Assessment commenced	28 July 2021
Visitor recommendation made	06 October 2021
Case reference	CAS-01060-D4G3M8

Summary of findings from this assessment

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme detailed in this report meets our standards of education and training. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

The outcomes of this process were as follows:

- Further Stage 1 assessment was not required based on the new programme being proposed for delivery.
- The visitors recommended the programme be approved as all programme level standards were met through their Stage 2 assessment.

The Education and Training Committee will now meet to consider the visitors recommendations and make a decision regarding programme approval.

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Section 1: Background information

Who we are

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.

Our standards

We approve institutions 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 standards are divided into two levels based on their relevance to the institution and programme(s). The following considerations were made when splitting standards between institution and programme level:

- Where accountability best sits, with either the accountable person for the institution or programme.
- How the standard is worded, with references to the education provider and processes often best sitting at the institution level, and references to the programme or profession often best sitting at the programme level.
- We have preferred seeking assurance at the institution level, to fit with our intention to put the institution at the centre of our quality assurance model.

Our approach to quality assuring education

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of institution 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
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards

Institutions 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

We take a staged approach to quality assurance, as we need to understand practices which will support delivery of all programmes within an institution, prior to assessing the programme level detail. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we assess to be assured 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 process we will initially review the proposal and then design our assessment based on the issues we find. As such the assessment methods will be different based on the issues which arise in each case.

How we make 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 of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. 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 meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

Section 2: Our assessment

Stage 1 assessment: The institution

Education provider	Swansea University
Key contact	Jayne Walters

As part of the initiation of the process the education provider indicated that the proposed programme would be part of Swansea University. This institution is well established with HCPC and currently delivers approved programmes in:

- Paramedic
- Hearing aid dispenser
- Independent / supplementary prescribing

In previous standards assessments of these programmes, visitors have established the institution level standards are met. The provider has also demonstrated this through ongoing monitoring carried out by the HCPC.

As part of the provider's definition of their institution, they have defined the policies, procedures and processes that apply to the programmes delivered within it. These relate to the institution level standards we set which ensure the following areas are managed effectively:

Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information for applicants• Assessing English language, character, and health• Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)• Equality, diversity and inclusion
Governance and leadership, and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective programme delivery• Effective staff management• Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level
Quality, monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic components, including how curricula are kept up to date• Practice components, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments• Learner involvement• Service user and carer involvement
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support• Ongoing professional suitability• Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)• Equality, diversity and inclusion
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objectivity• Progression and achievement• Appeals

Assurance that institution level standards are met

As part of this stage we considered how the proposed programmes fit into the named institution by considering any notable changes to the policies, procedures and processes related to the areas above.

We considered how the proposed programmes are assimilated with the management of existing approved programmes in the institution. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in way that was consistent with the definition of their institution. On this basis, we were satisfied it is appropriate for the programme to sit as part of Swansea University and take assurance the institution level standards will continue to be met by its introduction.

Stage 2 assessment: The programmes

Education provider	Swansea University
Accountable person (for the programmes)	Jayne Walters
Programmes	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science for Emergency Medical Technicians
Profession	Paramedic
Mode of study	Part time
Learner numbers	30 learners once per year
Type of programme	Pre-registration
Qualification level	Undergraduate
Start date	September 2021

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.

This programme is heavily based upon a programme we already approve at Swansea University (BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science). We therefore agreed with the institution that we would undertake a bespoke assessment of the programme level standards. This meant we did not require Swansea University to demonstrate those programme level standards which they continued to meet in the same way as on the existing approved programme. This removed four programme level standards from the visitor assessment.

Within our legacy processes, we would have considered the programme could start running before it had gained approval as it is heavily based on an existing approved programme. As this assessment commenced within the pilot stage of the development of the new quality assurance model, this is the approach we agreed for the approval of this programme.

We also considered:

- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
- Office for Students – Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) outcomes / National Student Survey (NSS)

Performance area	Data point / comparison	Benchmark	Data	Score
Performance indicator	Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	342	178	-0.07
Performance indicator	Aggregation of percentage not continuing	6.4	5.1	0.02
Performance indicator	Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	95.0	99.1	0.05
Teaching quality	TEF award	Not applicable	Gold	0.00
Learner / graduate satisfaction	NSS overall satisfaction score (Q27)	83.10	88.59	0.08
Performance indicator	HCPC AEPM cycle length	Not applicable		
Total				0.93

The first performance indicator is below benchmark. However, this has primarily been impacted by the difference in HCPC approved learner / cohort numbers for the supplementary prescribing programmes versus the actual (lower) numbers of current learners on the programmes. This, and the other information contained within the above table, was considered by the visitors as part of their review of the education provider's submission to assist in the development of any potential themes for further consideration.

Visitors appointed to undertake this assessment

We appointed the following panel to assess the above information against our programme level standards:

Registrant visitors	Timothy Hayes - Paramedic
	Kenneth Street - Paramedic

Assessment of the proposal

Initial review:

- The visitors reviewed the education provider's submission and considered their approach to each standard.
- This first review culminated in a virtual HCPC meeting in which the visitors discussed and made decisions around the standards they considered to be met and the areas they required further information around.
- Following the finalisation of areas to explore the visitors discussed and finalised the most appropriate quality activity to undertake this investigation.

Quality activity:

We design our assessment to be proportionate and appropriate to the issues identified and to seek input from relevant stakeholders when necessary. We considered it was appropriate and proportionate to request additional information via further documentation.

The themes we explored are as follows:

Theme	Reason for additional clarification / documentation
Ensuring there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.	<p>The visitors recognised this programme replaced an approved DipHE Paramedic Science for Emergency Medical Technicians programme. This is closing due to the revised level of qualification for entry to the Register for paramedics.</p> <p>The visitors also recognised the other approved paramedic provision across the institution. With the new programme, it appeared there would be up to three cohorts of learners undertaking practice-based learning at the same time due to overlaps between all the programmes. The visitors were unclear if there was sufficient capacity to absorb these learner numbers at the main provider of practice-based learning (Welsh Ambulance Service Trust ((WAST)).</p> <p>In addition, the visitors were unclear of the process for ensuring there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced individuals for non-ambulance practice-based learning.</p>
How the education provider develops and assesses professionalism, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.	<p>The visitors had been referred to a particular module to demonstrate this. However, they were unable to locate this module within the submission.</p> <p>In addition, the visitors were unclear how professionalism was developed and assessed across the programme in both the academic and practice-based learning settings.</p>

Summary of visitor findings

SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

A BSc (Hons) level is an appropriate level of qualification for the new paramedic programme so this standard is met.

SET 2: Programme admissions

Due to the nature of the programme, the documentation received by the visitors demonstrated a close collaboration with the employer when informing potential applicants about the programme and assessing applicants for suitability. For example, while the employer nominates the applicants, it is the institution who conducts the application process, including interview.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership

A programme specification and staff CV's were included within the submission. The visitors considered these demonstrated how the new programme would be aligned with the existing paramedic provision offered by the institution. They also considered this demonstrated the institution's commitment to increase their staff numbers to ensure a core paramedic team with a wider team to support key specialities.

The submission also outlined the additional skills laboratory which would be available to the learners via a different organisation. In addition the visitors considered the inclusion of the bridging module, to upskill WAST staff upon joining the programme, recognises that learners will be working remotely and ensures appropriate support is available.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 4: Programme design and delivery

Module proforma's were included as part of the submission. The visitors considered these demonstrated suitable learning outcomes to ensure the standards of proficiency could be met; support autonomous and reflective thinking; and develop evidence based practice. They also considered these outlined an appropriate mix of teaching and learning methods to ensure effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

The institution also mapped the learning outcomes to the College of Paramedics curriculum guidance and submitted this as evidence. The visitors considered this demonstrated a clear integration of theory and practice as well as how the programme reflects the professional body curriculum guidance.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 5: Practice-based learning

The visitors considered that the programme specification and module proforma's clearly demonstrated sufficient and appropriate practice-based learning opportunities. In addition, the visitors recognised the wide range of hospital and community practice-based learning opportunities to enhance the on ambulance experience.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 6: Assessment

The visitors considered that the programme specification clearly outlined the requirements to progress through, and successfully complete, the programme.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

Section 3: The visitors' recommendations

Based on these findings the visitors made the following recommendations to the Education and Training Committee:

Programme approval

The programme is recommended for approval, without conditions.

Section 4: Committee decision on approval

- The Education and Training Committee meet on 2 November 2021 and agreed to approve the programme.